The pride of North Carolina's electric cooperatives

Volume 37, No. 3, March 2005

Carolina country

CAROLINA GARDENERS get ready

Touchstone Energy®

Carolina Country annual gardening guide—page 11

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On the Cover

March brings long-awaited spring—all the excuse a gardener needs to get down and dirty, or at least start seriously planning to plant. Whether you've got a true green thumb or an uncanny ability to turn a green plant into a dried-up brown one, we've got some helpful gardening tips for you. (See gardening guide beginning on page 11.)

Orange oddities growing in the Piedmont. See more of your wacky plant photos from all over the state on pages 18–20.

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Snow in Youngsville

We took these pictures at our home in Youngsville, Franklin County, after a snow this winter. It was picture-perfect as long as you didn't have to drive in the snow. Our horse did not enjoy the snow as much as the kids. The pictures were taken by my 9-year-old daughter, Caitlyn. She has picked up Mom's love for taking pictures.

Christine Hawkins
Youngsville
Wake EMC

The young horse

In reply to the article in the November issue of Carolina Country about the "horse egg" sent in by Debby Scott, it's my understanding that a farmer was selling watermelons at his roadside stand and decides to play a little joke on a city slicker who stops by and ask what he was selling. After the farmer says they're "horse eggs," the city guy is taken in by the large green objects.

About that time a rat runs into a hole in one melon, so the farmer sells him the one with the rat.

As the city fellow turns to leave he drops his "horse egg" and the rat runs out.

The farmer is quick to reply and asks if he would like his money back.

"No," says the city fellow. "Because when he gets grown I couldn't have caught him anyway.

Billy Hassell
Plymouth

Snow in Dobson

I took this picture the morning after our first snow storm of the year. My family and I were at our cabin snow sledding, drinking hot chocolate and having fun!

Melissa Gentry
Dobson
Surry-Yadkin EMC

The Chevy That Worried Athens

Shortly after being discharged from the Navy in 1946, I enrolled as a student at the University of Georgia in Athens. With part of my Navy mustering-out pay, I bought a 1928 Chevy Coupe for $65. To make it compatible with the school colors, my buddy Don and I painted the body a glossy black and the fenders and wooden spokes a fire-engine red. When we had finished, Don lettered this inscription on the passenger door: Don't laugh—your daughter may be in here!

A few weeks later, an Athens girl who worked at the local bakery accepted my invitation to attend a picnic at a nearby park on the outskirts of town. Don and his girlfriend accompanied us. We drove the '28 over to my new girl's home to pick her up after church. The coupe had only a single seat, so with Don driving and his date in the middle, I had no choice but to have my young lady sit in my lap. As we drove out of the yard, her father walked out on the front porch and glared at the inscription on my side of the car.

Halfway through town, Don looked at his rearview mirror and exclaimed, "There's some idiot right on my bumper." My date peered back through the rear window and cried, "Oh, no, it's Daddy!"

Daddy lay on his horn and motioned us to pull over.

Don veered into a nearby filling station. An attendant walked over, leaned in the window and asked, "Can I help you?"

"Get out of my way!" snapped the irate father as he rushed up beside the car, "I'll help him!"

He opened the door and yanked his cringing daughter out of my lap, slammed her into his own car and sped away.

The droll mechanic stood silent for a moment, then bent and read the inscription on the door. With a devilish twinkle in his eye he peered in at me and asked, "Would there be anything else?"

Howard E. Alley
Highlands
Haywood EMC

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Girls: apply for Kay Yow camp scholarship

North Carolina's Touchstone Energy cooperatives and Hall of Fame basketball coach Kay Yow offer female middle school students scholarships to the Touchstone Energy/Kay Yow Basketball Camp. The scholarship will send 27 girls in sixth to eighth grade to the summer camp at historic Reynolds Coliseum on the North Carolina State University campus.

Deadline to apply is April 20. Winners will be announced by May 1.

Winners of the Touchstone Energy Kay Yow Basketball Camp scholarship will attend the overnight basketball camp, which runs from June 19–23. Campers must have permission from a parent or guardian to attend the camp and provide their own transportation to and from Raleigh.

Sixth through eighth grade female students interested in the scholarship can contact their local electric cooperative or Suzanne Ward at (800)-662-8835, ext. 2430 or by e-mail at suzanne.ward@ncemcs.com. Students can apply at www.ncemcs.com. Applicants will be judged on their academics, extra-curricular activities and an essay that must accompany the application.

Conducting the camp is Naismith Memorial Hall of Fame Coach Kay Yow and members of her North Carolina State University women's basketball team. For more information on the camp, visit www.kayyowcamps.com.

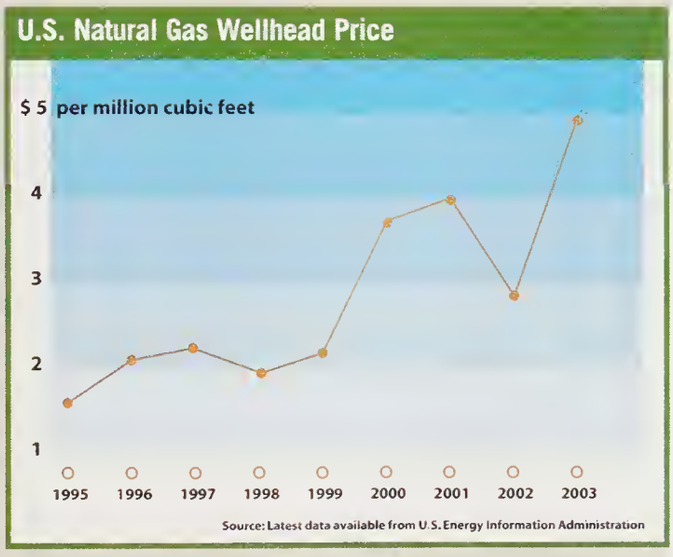
Rising coal and natural gas prices may lead to higher electric bills for consumers

The rising price of both natural gas and coal will likely contribute to higher electric bills nationwide, reports the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association. The two fuels are used to produce the majority of electricity in the U.S. The price hikes are passed directly onto the consumer.

Industry analysts say the rising price of natural gas is an issue of supply and demand. On the supply side, there are decreasing amounts of natural gas coming from developed areas. Moreover, gas exploration and development is currently limited or excluded in certain areas of the Gulf of Mexico, the Rocky Mountains, the Great Lakes and both the east and west coasts.

Demand for natural gas has increased in the past several years for a number of reasons. One reason is that natural gas forecasters predicted that supplies would be plentiful and inexpensive in the early 1990s. This spurred a building boom in gas-fired power plants rather than building more costly coal-based plants. In addition, natural gas burns cleaner than coal. Given looming environmental regulations governing coal plants and the promise of plentiful supply, power companies invested in building natural gas plants. This has increased demand for natural gas.

Coal prices have gone up as natural gas prices have gone up. Coal transportation by railroad also affects the price, especially for consumer-members of rural electric cooperatives. Rail is frequently the only viable mode of transportation for coal, and there is often no choice among rail carriers, making coal shippers "captive" to the railroads that, without competition, have little incentive to keep their prices low.



In addition, new regulations to reduce emissions from coal plants will require heavy financial investment in emission control equipment. The price of this compliance will be passed onto the consumer.

North Carolina's Touchstone Energy co-ops are non-profit businesses that deliver electricity at the cost of service. Most of the power is supplied through wholesale contracts with generation and transmission utilities.

Jeff Loven is named general manager of French Broad EMC

Jeff Loven of Marshall, French Broad EMC's manager of engineering, has been named general manager of French Broad EMC, replacing Charles Tolley, who retired December 31.

A native of Bakersville in Mitchell County, Loven graduated from Appalachian State University with a degree in mathematics, then earned a degree in electrical engineering from Clemson University. He began working at French Broad EMC as an apprentice lineman during summers and school breaks from 1990 to 1993. He was hired in January 1994 as a fulltime junior engineer and promoted to engineer in September 1994.

Loven has been involved in the co-op's implementation of computerized mapping, substation control and data acquisition system, installation of wide area computer networks, fiber optic communication grid within the service territory, and several transmission and relaying projects.

He earned his professional engineering license in 1999. He also holds a pilot's license and has a private rating in airplanes and a commercial license to fly helicopters. He lists being a dad to his 5-year-old daughter Rachael among his favorite things to do.

French Broad EMC serves more than 33,000 members in Madison, Buncombe, Yancey, and Mitchell counties, as well as in Unicoi and Cocke counties in Tennessee.

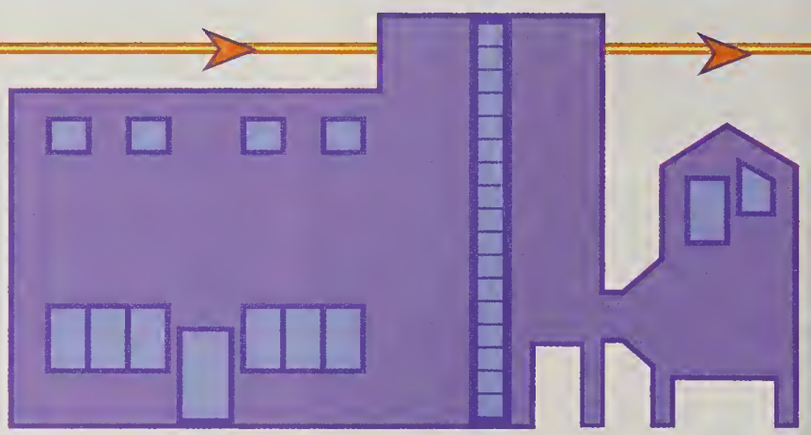
The Path of electricity

Electricity often travels long distances before reaching your home or business. Your electric cooperative buys wholesale power produced at generating facilities and distributes it through substations and power lines to consumer-members in its system.

Illustration by Katherine Fowler

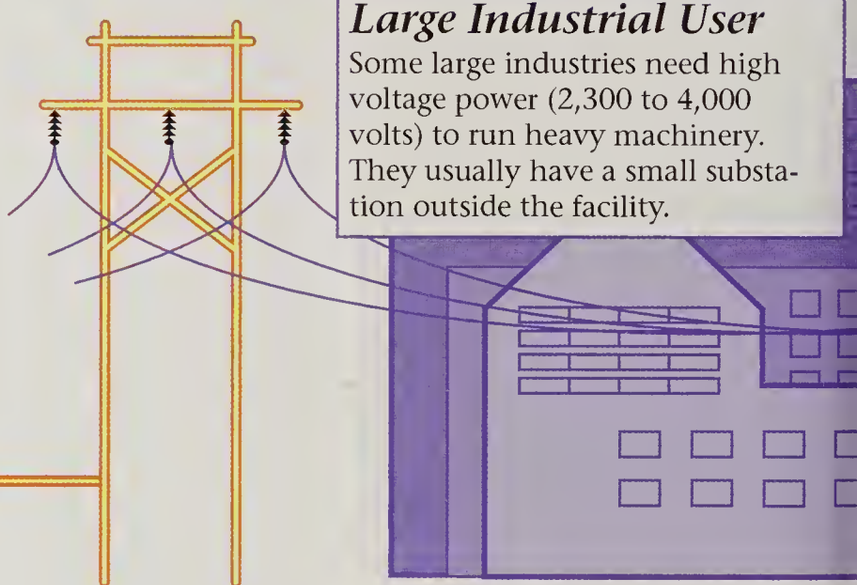
Power Plant

Inside a generating plant, water is heated to steam by nuclear reaction or fuels such as natural gas, oil and coal. Steam turns turbines and magnets to produce electric energy. Water at hydroelectric dams also can turn turbines.



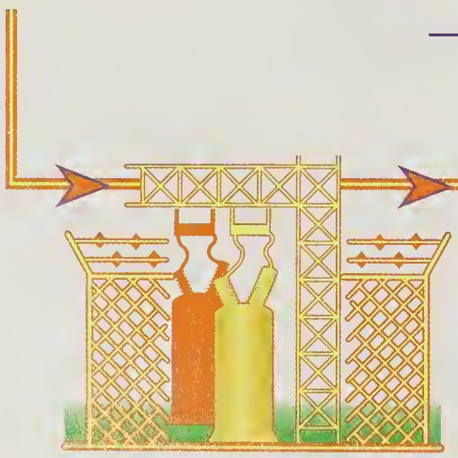
Large Industrial User

Some large industries need high voltage power (2,300 to 4,000 volts) to run heavy machinery. They usually have a small substation outside the facility.



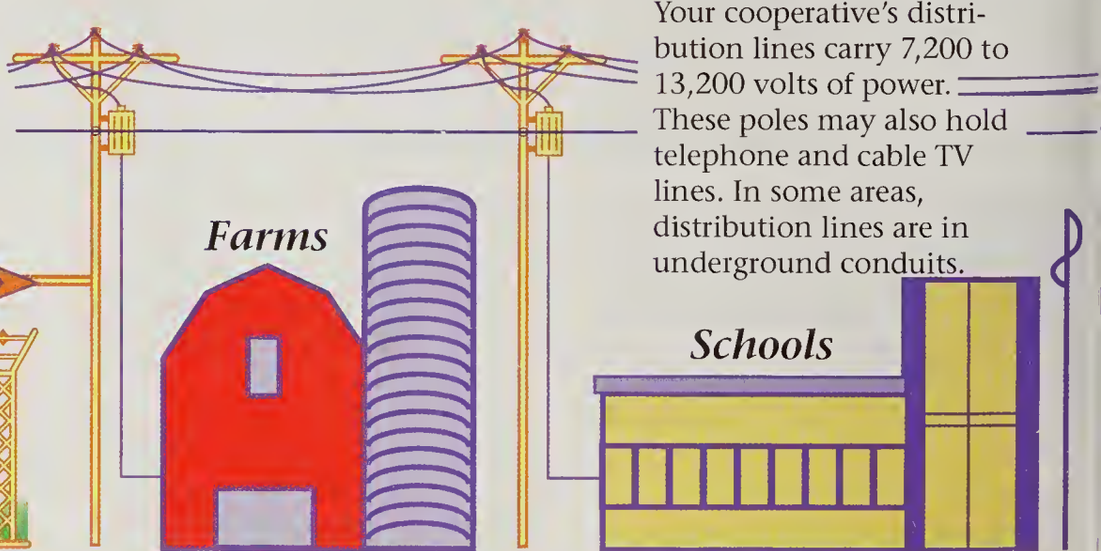
Local Substation

Transformers in medium-voltage neighborhood substations reduce the voltage even more to be distributed to homes and businesses. Your electric cooperative operates several of these substations.



Distribution Lines

Your cooperative's distribution lines carry 7,200 to 13,200 volts of power. These poles may also hold telephone and cable TV lines. In some areas, distribution lines are in underground conduits.



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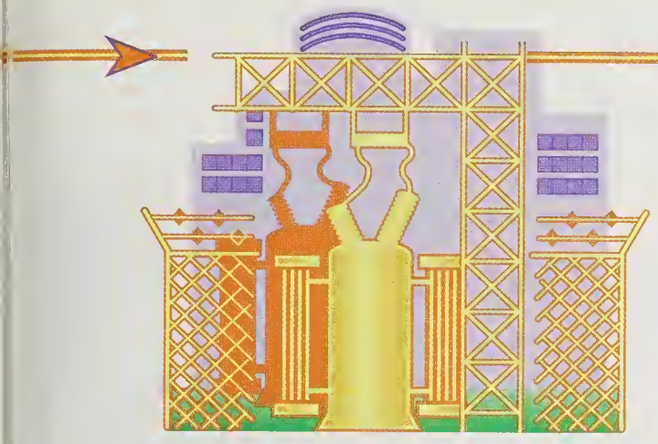
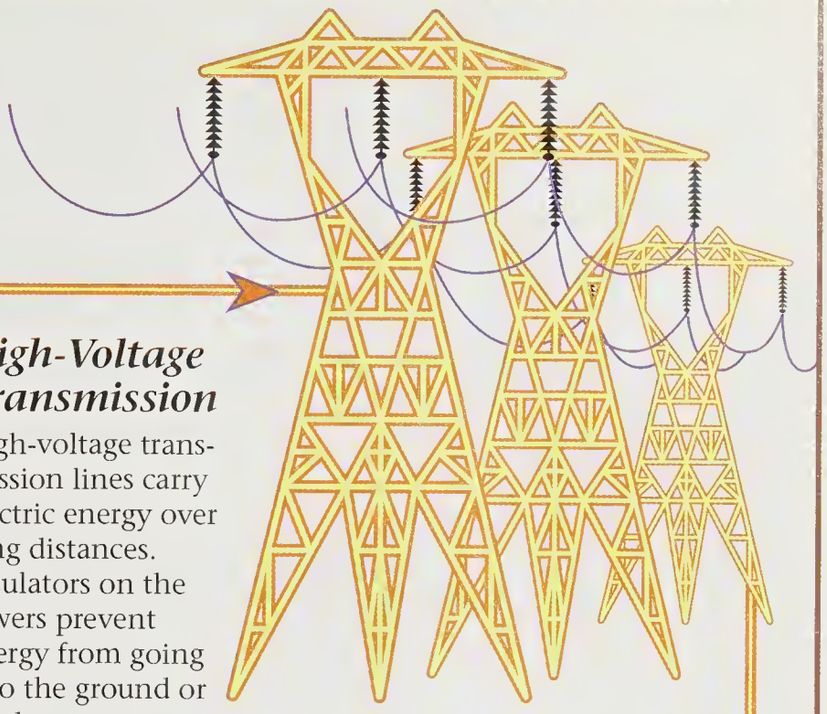
Step-Up Substation

Substation transformers at generating plants increase electric energy's pressure (voltage) so it can move long distances over power lines that transmit up to 500,000 volts.



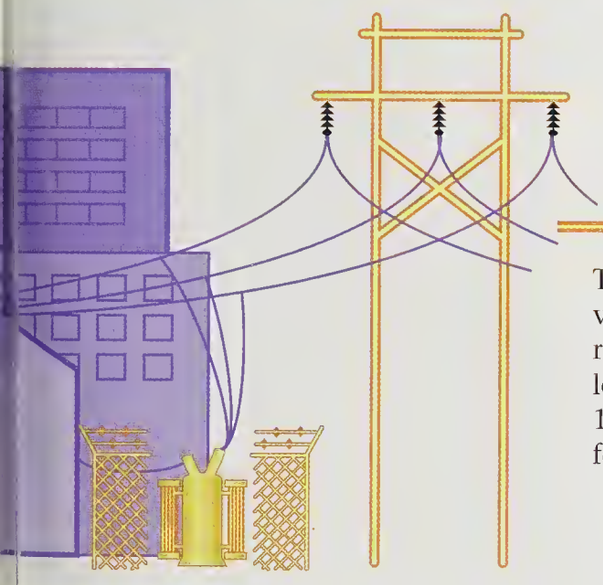
High-Voltage Transmission

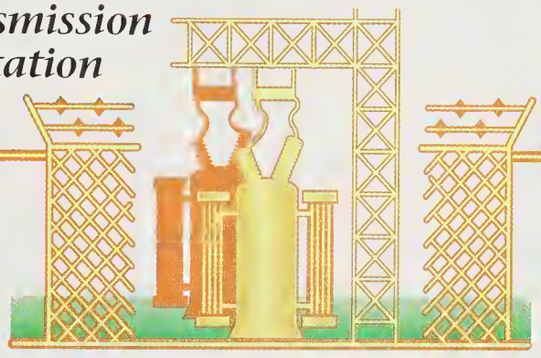
High-voltage transmission lines carry electric energy over long distances. Insulators on the towers prevent energy from going into the ground or on the structure.



Transmission Substation

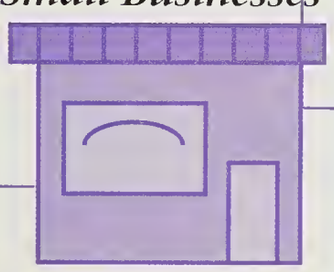
Transformers at high-voltage substations reduce voltage to a lower level (34,500 to 115,000 volts) suitable for local use.



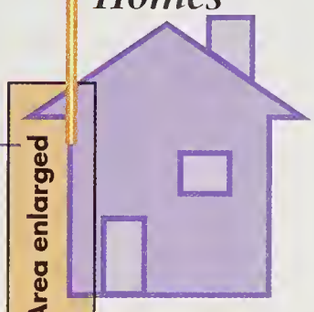


Electric power passes through transformers on poles to reduce voltage to levels for use inside farms, schools, small businesses and homes (120/240 volts).

Small Businesses

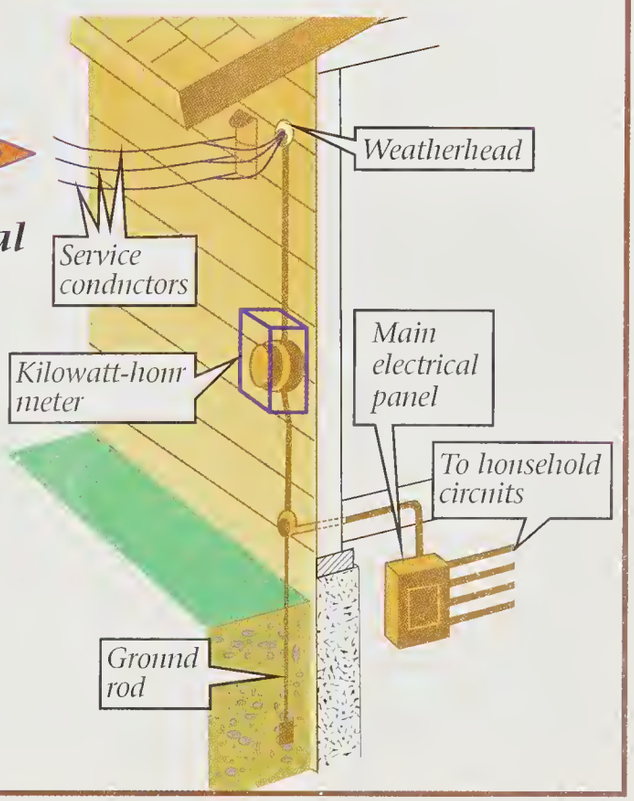


Homes



Area enlarged

Residential Electrical Delivery



SHOWING Respect

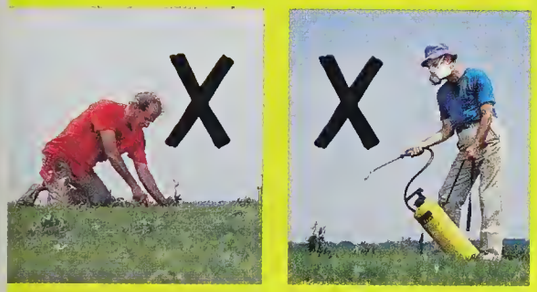
By Donnaree Hardy

To show respect for the people he serves and their families, Greene County Sheriff Lemmie Smith and his department stop traffic and lead the procession for every funeral that takes place in the county. It's a tradition that has died from just about everywhere but Greene County.

Sheriff Smith led this procession last fall for the late Tommy Dawson of the Bull Head community. Taylor-Tyson Funeral Service of Snow Hill handled the arrangements. Shown is Deputy Sheriff Jon Willis standing at attention during the traffic memorial at the intersection of Hwy. NC 58 and Hwy. NC 13 near Snow Hill.

The sheriff says he also tries to attend the graveside ceremonies as well.

Watering chores, water bills! Sweating behind a roaring mower! Spraying poison chemicals and digging weeds..



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Mow your zoysia lawn once a month – or less! It rewards you with weed-free beauty all summer long.

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Would you believe a lawn could be perfect when watered just once? In Iowa, the state's biggest Men's Garden club picked a zoysia lawn as "top lawn – nearly perfect." Yet, this lawn had been watered only once all summer to August!

In PA, Mrs. M.R. Mitter wrote "I've never watered it, only when I put the plugs in...Last summer we had it mowed 2 times...When everybody's lawns here are brown from drought, ours stays as green as ever." *That's how zoysia lawns cut water bills and mowing! Now read on!*

2 ENDS RE-SEEDING NEVER NEEDS REPLACEMENT

Plug in our zoysia grass and you'll never have to spend money on grass seed again! Since you won't be buying seeds, you won't need to dig and rake – then hope the seeds take root before birds eat them or the next hard rain washes them away.

3 NO NEED TO DIG UP OLD GRASS

Plant Amazoy in old lawn, new ground, whatever. Set 1" square plugs into holes in the soil 1 foot apart, checkerboard style. Plugs spread to drive out old, unwanted growth, weeds included. Easy instructions with your order. If you can put a cork into a bottle, you can plug in Amazoy.

4 FOR SLOPES, PLAY AREAS, AND BARE SPOTS

You can't beat Amazoy as the low cost answer for hard-to-cover spots, play-worn areas, or to end erosion on slopes.

Endless Supply of Plug Transplants

Transplant plugs from established Amazoy as you desire – plugged area grows over to provide all the plugs you'll ever need.

FREE! Exclusive Step-on Plugger with orders of 625 plugs or more.

Starting your lawn is easy with this sturdy, 2-way plugger. Cuts away unwanted growth as it digs holes for plugs. Saves bending, time, work. Invaluable transplant tool.

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5 IT STAYS GREEN IN SPITE OF HEAT AND DROUGHT

"The hotter it gets, the better it grows!" Plug-in zoysia thrives in blistering heat, yet it won't winter kill to 30° below zero. It just goes off its green color after killing frosts, begins regaining its green color as temps. in the spring are consistently warm. Of course, this varies with climate.

6 NO NEED TO SPEND MONEY ON DANGEROUS CHEMICALS

Since zoysia lawns resist insects AND diseases, you avoid the risk of exposing your family or pets to weedkillers and pesticide poisons. Plug in Amazoy and save the money, avoid the risks!

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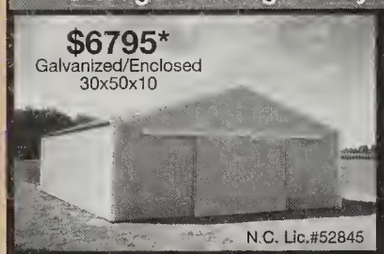

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The Carolina Country Garden

Gardeners, dig into the latest Carolina Country gardening guide. Spring is right around the corner and there's no time like the present to make plans for your most bountiful garden yet.

We've got a year's worth of seasonal tips from your favorite gardening guide, Hank Smith. Plus your stories about some off-the-wall plants you have to see, or smell, to believe (Potatoes that resemble Snoopy? Flowers that smell like rotten meat?). And support from Carolina Country advertisers.

Happy gardening!

Vegetable and flower images courtesy of W Atlee Burpee & Co.

Thanks Hank for 22 Years of Gardening Advice

photo © Todd Gaul

Henry J. "Hank" Smith has advised Carolina Country gardeners since August 1983, making him the most senior of our contributors. He's not only outlasted everyone else, he's also maintained his popularity. "Hank's Gardening Guide" has been among the best-read pages of this magazine.

In December, Hank was injured in a fall at his retirement village and advised us later that he cannot continue his monthly column. Along with our readers, we will greatly miss hearing from him each month.

We've assembled here a collection of Hank's gardening tips for year-round reference. While he considers the variances among North Carolina's regions, Hank advises gardeners to pay attention to the seasonal conditions affecting their own gardens.

A Florida native, Hank Smith was a staff member at North Carolina State University's Horticultural Science Department before becoming a fulltime consultant. He earned bachelor's and master's degrees in horticultural science at the University of Florida. He served fellowships at Harvard and Penn State universities, worked as an Extension specialist at Mississippi State and was landscape editor for Southern Living magazine. He's hosted a weekly TV program, published many articles and photographs, and served as an advisor and officer to several horticultural societies.

You can reach him at:

Henry J. Smith
c/o Sally Coppedge
105 Warley Circle
Cary, NC 27513

How Does Your Garden Grow?

by Hank Smith

Spring

MARCH | APRIL | MAY

Garden Vegetables and Fruits

- Most vegetables have "friends" with whom they grow and produce better. For example: Beans thrive when planted near beets, strawberries, corn, eggplant, squash, peas, tomatoes, carrots, radishes, potatoes and celery.
- Once established, perennial plants will provide a bountiful harvest every year for many years. Three that are easy to grow are asparagus, horseradish and rhubarb.
- Vegetables can be used as part of the flower garden. For example, carrots to edge a flowerbed (the foliage gives a fern-like edging); strawberries as a low-edging plant or groundcover; and cabbages backed with zinnias, with petunias in front.
- Sow or plant in warm weather: beans, carrots, squash, peppers, cucumbers, eggplant, okra, melons and tomatoes. Sow or plant in cool weather: beets, peas, radishes, broccoli, spinach, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, lettuce, parsley, spinach, swiss chard and turnips.
- Remove blooms from herbs to direct plant energy to produce foliage, not flowers.
- To grow your own pineapple, twist the top off of a pineapple, plant it in a pot of fertile soil, and then wait. Place the plant outside in the sun. Give it plenty of water. If the temperature drops below 45 degrees, bring the pot indoors. It takes about two years for the plant to yield an edible pineapple.

Trees and Shrubs

- The first spring is a critical time for newly-planted shrubs and trees. Water them deeply once or twice a week during dry periods.
- Balled-and-burlapped plants should have the ball of soil at least one-half as wide as the shrubs' top spread. If the ball of earth is quite small in comparison with the top, the shrub will have difficulty surviving the shock of transplanting.
- Remove faded blooms when they appear on bedding plants and shrubs.
- Trees like to be transplanted before the end of March. In mid-and-upper South, April is satisfactory.
- Trees require good soil drainage. Poor results usually follow if water stands for a long period after a heavy rain.

Flowers

- Good bedding plants for bright sunny spots: portulaca, zinnia, marigold, salvia and celosia.
- The best and easiest to grow of the flowering perennial vines include: hybrid clematis, autumn clematis, silver-lace vine, honeysuckle, wisteria and trumpet creeper.

❧ Plant masses of zinnias, marigolds and petunias. These popular annuals contribute summer-long color accents.

❧ Close cousin of morning glory vines, moon vine (Calonyction aculeatum) produces creamy-white blooms that open at sunset and remain until daybreak. Growing 10–15 feet in height, vines need full sun and rich soil.

Lawn

❧ Conditioners improve soil by increasing moisture and fertilizer holding capacity. They also absorb air and water. Organic materials that can be used as soil conditioners include old sawdust, cotton gin waste, peanut hulls and sewer sludge.

❧ Fertilizer and lime should be added on the basis of a soil test. Your local county extension office offers information on the soil test and grass varieties.

❧ No matter what type of grass you choose, successful growth depends largely on soil preparation. Level and grade the area to be planted. Fill in low places and slope lawn away from the house to prevent future moisture problems in the house's foundation that can occur after heavy rains. After leveling, add and mix soil conditioners and fertilizers.

❧ Make sure the mower blade is sharp before the first mowing. A sharp blade cuts clean and doesn't tear the grass tips.

❧ Put grass seed in the refrigerator overnight before planting. This cuts the germination time in half.

❧ The average lawn needs about one inch of water per week to stay healthy. If there is less than an inch of rain, use sprinklers to make up the difference. Always water deeply, as a light sprinkling can do more harm than good.

Treatments

❧ Five tablespoons of bleach in a gallon of water, shaken well, will help prolong the life of cut flowers. Keep the vase full of solution.

❧ To attract hummingbirds, bees, and butterflies, plant bee balm in flowerbeds.

❧ To keep mosquitoes from outdoor sitting areas, plant marigolds nearby.

Indoors

❧ Water-retaining polymers added to soil when planting potted plants will help hold moisture.

❧ Spider plants are well adapted to hanging baskets in partial shade.

Summer

JUNE | JULY | AUG

Garden Vegetables and Fruits

❧ Green beans are a good temporary groundcover, easy to eliminate when a permanent use of soil takes place. They also enrich the soil.

❧ If building a garden in a grassy area, it's important to cultivate so your crops roots can penetrate. Aerate using a spade, pitchfork, or hoe. For a large garden area, you may want to rent or borrow a motor-driven cultivator.

❧ Eggplants need full sun all day.

❧ Do your replantings as soon as early crops are harvested. Keep ahead of the weeds with a hoe or cultivator.

❧ If you preserve figs, gather them several days before they fully ripen to reduce splitting and souring damage.

Trees and Shrubs

❧ Butterfly shrub (buddleia) is difficult to successfully transplant. The best bet is to do root cuttings.

❧ Apply heavy mulch to shrubs during the hot, dry days of summer.

❧ Long periods without rain can stress trees. Water deeply and provide more mulch to keep roots cool and provide moisture. To conserve water, irrigate in early morning or late afternoon.

Flowers

❧ Plant fragrant flowers near your patio or deck. Among the most odoriferous: scabiosa, petunia, calendula, candytuft, ten-weeks stock, ageratum, snapdragon, and sweet sultan.

❧ Cut delphiniums back after blooming to prevent seeding. A second bloom will be encouraged late in summer.

❧ When the kids are old enough, kid-sized garden tools and a defined plot of their own teaches responsibility.

❧ Annual sunflowers are drought-resistant and sun loving. When seedheads dry out, they'll even provide food for birds. A very large selection is available, both in size and color.

❧ For a longer blooming period, keep faded blooms of annuals pinched off.

Lawn

❧ Heavily compacted soil is most easily aerated with a mechanical device that looks a bit like a lawn roller with hollow tubes attached.

❧ Weed young crabgrass plants by hand if the area is small. Maintain lawn at sufficient height so that young crabgrass seedlings cannot gain a foothold.

❧ Variegated liriope, easily transplanted at any time of year, creates a good groundcover for narrow, confined areas. Secure container grown or separate existing with a sharp knife. An established clump usually yields four clumps.

continued on p. 14

Chili peppers are as simple to cultivate as tomatoes, and they need only a small space in your garden to grow.

Courtesy W. Atlee Burpee & Co.

Rainbow swiss chard should be planted in cool weather.

Treatments

Your kitchen garbage makes plants thrive. Banana peels contribute potassium to help roses form big blooms. Chop peels and add around base of plants once a month during summer. Acid-loving plants like azaleas, gardenias and conifers get a helpful fix from coffee grounds. Sprinkle around plants before watering. The grounds also repel slugs. Eggshells contribute calcium, which helps all plants build strong stems. Pulverize eggshells and sprinkle around plant bases once a month.

Aphids have ruined many plants, but so have chemical treatments to remove those tiny pests. Try spraying the leaves with a mild solution of biodegradable soap, using two tablespoons of soap to a gallon of water.

Indoors

Houseplants tend to revitalize if moved outdoors in the summer. Move them to dappled shade for a few days, then to a spot shaded from noonday sun.

Flowers for indoor decorations should be cut early in the morning. Cut at an angle to insure long vase life and place in container of tepid water.

Among good cut flowers are zinnias, sunflowers, crinums, dahlias, rudbeckias, and Mexican sunflowers.

Fall

SEPT | OCT | NOV

Garden Vegetables and Fruits

Sprinkle bonemeal and rock phosphate around the winter garden of cabbage, broccoli and lettuce. Top plants with a layer of compost. This combination will insulate plants from the cold.

Now is a good time to plant a strawberry patch. These ornamental plants with white blossoms and red fruit make attractive, low-edging plants for flowerbeds.

Time to plant fruit trees, blueberries, blackberries and bunch grapes.

Winter squash and pumpkins store better if you leave a few inches of stem attached when you harvest them.

Trees and Shrubs

Crape myrtles are best grown as small deciduous trees.

Remove blooms from shrubs.

Dogwoods contribute a beautiful accent to yard landscapes. When mowing the lawn or using a grass edger, take care not to cut the bark of trees. Otherwise you may attract borers that can damage the tree.

Flowers

Cut faded blooms from roses to prevent plants from producing hips, the fruit that contains the seed. This diverts plant energy to producing flower buds instead of seeds.

Now's the time to harvest dried hydrangea blooms for decorations.

Order tulip bulbs for planting later in the year. Store bulbs under refrigeration at 35 to 40 degrees for 60 days immediately before planting.

Several types of annuals can be taken up in the fall and brought indoors to bloom for several months. Ageratum, browallia, nicotiana, phlox drummondi, petunia, and torenias are among the best.

If October and November are dry, give perennials a deep final soaking so they will go dormant in good condition. They'll be less subject to winterkill.

Lawn

Lawns need about an inch of water a week. When rainfall is scant, measure the amount applied by using coffee cans at equal distance within the sprinkler coverage area. When cans have about an inch of water in them, the lawn will have enough water.

Overseed warm-season grasses such as zoysia, centipede or Bermuda with annual rye grass for winter color. Seed early before tree leaves begin to fall.

Treatments

Three elements cultivated soil often lacks include nitrogen, phosphorus,

and potassium. All three are available in commercial fertilizers.

❧ Hand pick slugs or set out pans of beer to trap these nighttime nibblers. If you spread poison bait, be careful to keep it away from children and pets.

❧ When you collect leaves for mulch, select those that curl as they fall such as maple, oak and birch. Flat leaves can create soggy soil. Mix pine straw with broad leaves to help prevent packing.

❧ A good way to eliminate many insects in the soil is to plow in the fall. Let soil lie fallow over winter. Don't smooth soil surface down into an even layer.

Indoors

❧ Geraniums make good house plants year-round if given proper care.

❧ Plants that bring good luck—like lucky bamboo and money tree—continue to gain popularity along with elegant orchids and other tropical plants. Ferns, once popular in the '60's and '70's, are also making a comeback.

❧ Plant carrot seeds in small pots and place in the sunshine. Before frost, bring them indoors. Place pots among house plants where they give a fern-like accent. Plants do best in bright light.

❧ Indoor potted plants that have spent the summer outdoors need to slowly adjust to their return inside. Move these potted plants to filtered light for a few days.

❧ Many herbs are perennials, easy to grow, disease resistant, hardy, useful and inexpensive. Basil, one of the most common herbs that can be found in garden centers, is excellent for growing in pots and indoors.

Miscellaneous Tips

❧ Study garden catalogs and place orders for plants you'd like to get. Sometimes supply houses sell out early, so it's wise to get orders in the mail. Many local nurseries and garden centers reduce prices in autumn, clearing shelves for winter supplies.

❧ Landscape planning involves more than beauty. Consider these major factors: Is the plan functional and suitable? Is it economical? Does it require too much maintenance? Sometimes it pays to consult a landscape architect, landscape gardener, or a master gardener from your local Cooperative Extension service.

Winter

DEC | JAN | FEB

Garden Vegetables and Fruits

❧ Remove grass and weeds from gardens so they don't become a haven for insect eggs and diseases.

Plant Delights Nursery, Inc.

Calanthe sieboldii takane is a hybrid, hardy orchid that grows easily in a woodland garden.

❧ Till garden soil to expose wintering insects and eggs to killing temperatures.

❧ Continue to apply compost and other organic materials to vegetable and flower garden sites. Spade in 3–4 inches to prepare the soil for spring plantings.

Trees and Shrubs

❧ Trees and shrubs planted now usually have time to become established before spring's warm weather arrives.

❧ A tree with a 2-inch diameter trunk can easily outgrow a larger tree because it will transition faster and is less likely to go into transition shock when planted.

❧ When rainfall is scant, continue to water trees and shrubs. Plants need water even when temperatures are low. More shrubs are killed in winter by lack of water than by low temperatures.

❧ Choose dwarf trees and shrubs to allow closer spacing. For instance, instead of planting full-size southern magnolia, try a selection that will grow to only 30 feet, such as little gem or Bracken's brown beauty.

Flowers

❧ Complete planting of spring-flowering bulbs. Caladiums and gladioli are outstanding plants in this group.

❧ Pansies display vibrant colors, with shades of blue, deep purple, wine red, maroon and yellow. Plants flower from fall through late spring.

❧ Increase stock of perennials by digging/dividing/resetting these: chrysanthemums, daylily, Shasta daisy, aster, coreopsis and gaillardia.

Lawn

❧ While weather is still cool, plant shade-tolerant groundcover to carpet areas where growing grass is a problem, like underneath shade trees. Some suggestions for shade-tolerant groundcover are: vincas, ajugas, liriope, pachysandra or English ivy.

❧ A mowing strip between shrubbery beds and lawn areas will reduce maintenance time.

Indoors

❧ When using house plants for indoor interest during cold months group those with similar light requirements.

❧ Leaves of houseplants should be gently washed with warm water at least twice a month to remove dust.

❧ In terms of cost, beauty, ease and durability, bromeliads make great house plants and reward the grower with pretty blooms and foliage.

❧❧❧

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PLANTS FROM Another Planet?

A selection of strange-looking plants you've grown and known

Out-of-state spuds

When I was growing up in Burke County, gardening and canning took up a lot of our time in the summer. My grandmother, Ruby Dameron, grew this potato in her garden. She said, "That's what happens when you grow Idaho potatoes in North Carolina."

Red Blanton
Dobson, Surry-Yadkin EMC

Looks good, smells bad

This is a fascinating plant called a stapelia that my friend Edith Page gave me several years ago. Each year in late summer we eagerly await the appearance of large "pods" which open into strange flowers that feel like human skin, have fine hair all over, and smell like rotten meat. The only insect interested in them is the green botfly (if you look closely they can be seen near the centers of the flowers), who find their stench irresistible.

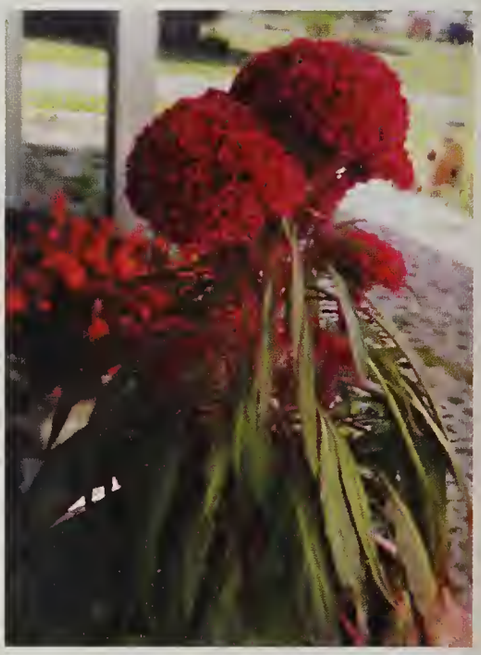
Every time she goes out, my pug also has to stop to cautiously sniff them (and quickly pull her head back in distaste). Our husbands cannot understand why we love our bizarre stapelias and insist on starting more and more plants until our porches are filled with them. And with botflies!

Lisa Hlavnicka
Fayetteville, South River EMC

Sunflower tower

We didn't plant the sunflower seed, but we guess the birds dropped it. It is about 17 feet tall. Our granddaughter, Dara Rasnake, is standing beside it.

Betty and Harry Blume
Concord, Union Power



Rooster combs

My mother calls these "rooster's combs," because they are the color of the combs on the roosters we raised on the farm.

They are very big and tall. The tops are red and full of seeds. They have no odor to smell. They are easy to grow, and they multiply. And oh so pretty!

I love watching them grow and the response of insects when they land on them. Children and adults always try to smell them and feel the hard red tops. People driving by will stop and want information on the rooster combs. I share plants and seeds when available.

Betty W. Gurley
Goldsboro, Tri-County EMC

GO ONLINE
www.carolinacountry.com

Thanks to all who sent us pictures and stories. More that couldn't fit here are on our Web site. Next month we'll publish your "road trip horror stories" in our annual North Carolina touring guide. [Deadline was Feb. 15.] See the remaining themes and rules of our "Nothing Could Be Finer" series on page 20.

Grey's potatoes

This is a picture of my husband, Grey Cain, and a potato that he grew. It was the first year my husband had planted a garden. He planted eight rows of potatoes, both red and white. He planted 100 pounds, and it turned into around 500. He had no idea how many 100 pounds would make. I thought we would never finish picking potatoes.

They came out all shapes and sizes. He gave a lot away to family, friends and to the needy. This one potato has a real odd shape.

Darlene Cain
Pilot Mountain, Surry-Yadkin EMC

Seymour

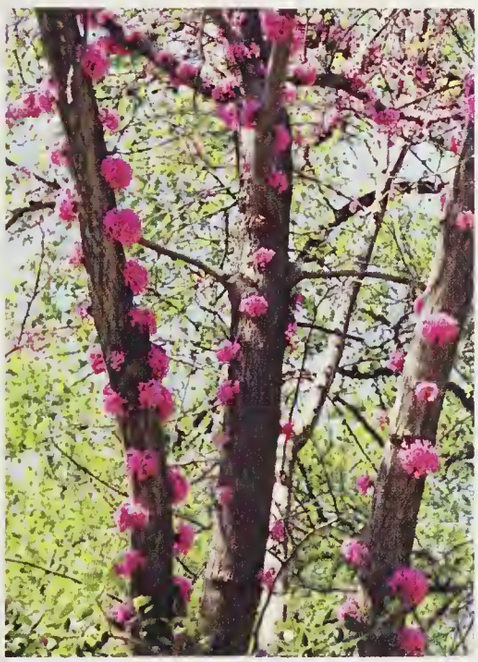
This is a night-blooming cereus named "Seymour" from "Little Shop of Horrors" fame. The carnivorous, alien plant in that show was always demanding, "Feed me, Seymour, feed me!"

I have found that with plenty of food and water, this erratically-foliaged plant almost has a mind all its own with its aggressive blooming tendencies. During blooming season, you can almost see and hear the flowers open right before your very eyes.

This plant is relatively easy to grow and yields spectacular blossoms. Its foliage grows in random directions with new shoots sprouting everywhere. It is reported that these plants can bloom with as many as seven to nine blossoms at one time.

My plant first bloomed with one magnificent blossom about 8 inches in diameter. To my surprise, later that same year, this pot-bound plant produced four more beautiful blossoms. The four flowers began unfurling about 7 p.m. one night and by 10 were fully open and gorgeous. By the next morning, the blossoms had closed up and were wilted. This usually happens only once a year, so if you blink, you just might miss its spectacular show.

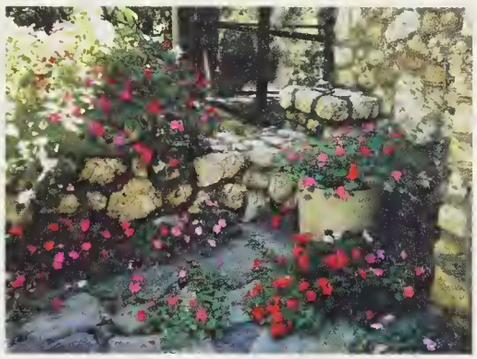
Lois M. Kelly
Morehead City, Carteret-Craven Electric



Redbud gone wild

This is a regular eastern redbud. Stewart Clark, a friend of mine, called me over to look at it one day because that year it had blooms as big as softballs, as well as normal blooms, all up and down the trunks.

Terry Holdsclaw
Terrell, EnergyUnited



A riot on the porch

I nominate my wife's out-of-control impatiens plants. We plant seven planters full of seedlings every spring. Wind and children pop the seed pods as soon as they are ripe, and the plants multiply rapidly during the summer. By the end of August, we cannot even walk on our porch without risking stepping on a riot of colorful, blossoming plants. They soon begin to take over the porch.

James Singleton
Hillsborough, Piedmont EMC

Mushroom bouquet

What a surprise my wife found when she went for her early morning walk last September in rural Orange County. As she passed by a large, rotting, white oak stump, she noticed what she thought was a bouquet of lovely orange flowers. When she stooped to inspect them, she yelled for me to come and see the "mushroom bouquet."

Trish and I have always loved flora and fauna, but she is particularly fascinated by the various mosses, lichens and mushrooms that can be found in the woods near our home. This discovery was such a treasure that we took several photos of the bouquet to prove that it was real and to show our friends what we find in our spare time.

continued on p. 20

Having retired from Piedmont EMC and my wife from Orange County Schools, we now have more time to really enjoy the beauty of God's creation. We no longer miss special things that have been right under our noses.

Bob and Trish Randall
Hillsborough, Piedmont EMC

Snoopy Potato

This is "Snoopy Potato," a potato I harvested this past fall from my Ashe County garden. It looked strikingly like Snoopy and then developed strategically placed potato "eyes," making the spud look even more like Charlie Brown's beloved dog.

Douglas Butler
Crumpler, Blue Ridge Electric

The mutant cone

I have long prided myself as a gardener, an art passed down from my mother. Several summers ago I got a surprise amidst my coneflowers. Instead of the usual pink flowers, I had one plant where the flowers were all green with what looked like miniature green flowers shooting off the main cone like fireworks. I was delighted with my "mutant cone." All my friends and neighbors loved it. Year after year we awaited its return.

However, disappointment struck when I was reading my hometown paper this past summer online, The Courier Journal out of Louisville, Ky. What I thought was one of nature's pure works of art turned out to be a serious plant disease. In no uncertain terms, the article instructed readers to dig up and burn any such infected plant before it infected the rest of your garden, where some plants could not battle the disease.

With a heavy heart, I went to the garden and dug up my precious mutant. Sure enough, I could see on other plants telltale afflictions that were described in the article. It was a sad day indeed.

Kathy Buckmaster
Wake Forest, Wake EMC

Bottle tree

I have always been fascinated by bottle trees. I researched to find that ancient folklore believed glass bottles attracted spirits and could trap them inside (ever wonder why glass bottles moan in the wind?). The Encyclopedia of Southern Culture describes a bottle tree as "the poor person's stained glass window."

Linda Boyette
Windsor, Roanoke Electric

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Here are the themes in our **"Nothing Could Be Finer"** series. Send us your stories and pictures about these themes. If yours is chosen for publication, we'll send you $50. You don't have to be the best writer. Just tell it from your heart.

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Safety Lessons
Accidents and mishaps that taught you a safety lesson.
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The best things about growing up or living on a farm.
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The First Meal I Ever Made
What was it and how did you like it?
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August 2005
What I Learned From My Kids
Sometimes children can teach grown-ups a thing or two.
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Celebrity Look-alikes
Photos of people who are dead-ringers for someone famous. Digital ones must be 300 dpi and at least 4 by 6 inches.
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Deadline: August 15

November 2005
It's the Thought That Counts
The dumbest gift you ever received.
Deadline: Sept. 15

December 2005
Holiday Mishaps
Those holiday plans that just didn't work out as you hoped they would.
Deadline: Oct. 15

The Rules

1. Approximately 200 words or less.
2. Only one entry per household per month.
3. Photos are welcome. Digital photos must be 300 dpi and actual size.
4. E-mailed or typed, if possible. Otherwise, make it legible.
5. Include your name, electric co-op, mailing address and phone number.
6. If you want your entry returned, please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope. (We will not return others.)
7. We pay $50 for each submission published. We retain reprint rights.
8. We will post on our Web site more entries than we publish, but can't pay for those submissions. (Let us know if you don't agree to this.)
9. Send to: Nothing Finer, Carolina Country, 3400 Sumner Blvd., Raleigh, NC 27616
   Or by e-mail: carolina.country@ncemcs.com.
   Or through the Web: www.carolinacountry.com

A Garden Planting Guide

by Laura C. Martin

If you are creating a new bed, plan before you plant. Leave paths through the bed so you can easily access plants—especially those you will be picking or harvesting. Place the most useful plants (herbs, cut flowers and vegetables) in the most accessible places. Place taller plants at the back and shorter plants toward the front for aesthetic purposes. Be sure you can get water to all the plants easily.

NAME (TYPE)	HOW TO PLANT	SIZE (OR SPACING)	LIGHT	NOTES
EARLY SPRING				
Flowers				
Dianthus (annual, perennial)	transplants	4"–24" tall	full sun to partial shade	Some types have long bloom time, such as Maiden pinks or Cottage pinks
Pansies (annual)	transplants	2"–18" tall	full sun to partial shade	Blooms only in cool weather
Vegetables and Herbs				
Greens (annual vegetables)	transplants	plant 18" apart	full sun to partial shade	Loose-leaf lettuces withstand heat better than heading varieties; leaves can be harvested as the plants grow
Oregano (perennial herb)	transplants	12"–24" tall	full sun	Pick leaves early in the day for seasoning sauces; egg dishes
Onions (annual vegetable)	transplant sets	2"–3" apart (small), 6" apart (large)	full sun	Set out when soil is 45 degrees; about three months to harvest
Parsley (biennial herb)	transplants	6"–12" tall	full sun	Full sun; can begin harvesting leaves almost immediately
Rosemary (herb shrub)	transplants	5"–72" tall	full sun	Hardy outdoors where temperatures do not drop below 10 degrees
Strawberries (short-lived perennial)	transplants	plant 12"–18" apart	full sun	Bears fruit in three to six weeks, generally in early summer
MID-SPRING				
Flowers				
Begonia (annual)	transplants	6"–12" tall	partial to full shade	Fertilize regularly; bronze-leafed varieties tolerate more sun
Cosmos (annual)	seeds or transplants	12"–72" tall	full sun	Do not fertilize; stake if necessary; use as cut flowers; easy to grow
Impatiens (annual)	transplants	6"–10" tall	partial shade	Blooms well all summer; cannot tolerate frost; fertilize every six weeks
Verbena (annual)	transplants	8"–48" tall	full sun	Attracts butterflies; keep tips pinched off to encourage branching; drought tolerant
Vinca (annual)	transplants	4"–14" tall	full sun to partial shade	Mulch and fertilize; cut back in late summer to encourage growth for early fall; easy to grow
Vegetables and Herbs				
Broccoli (annual)	transplants	plant 18"–24" apart	full sun	Cut center head and a few inches of stalk when harvesting; does not grow well in heat
Dill (biennial herb)	seeds	36" tall	full sun	Grow for leaves or seeds; flowers July through September; seeds usually come beginning of second year
LATE SPRING				
Flowers				
Garden phlox (perennial)	transplants	12"–36" tall	full sun (partial shade in warmer regions)	Plant in rich soils; provide lots of moisture; fragrant, beautiful blooms
Cockscomb (annual)	transplants	4"–18" tall	full sun	Fertilize every four weeks; good for dried flowers; blooms from late spring through fall; easy to grow
Sunflower (annual)	seeds	2'–12' tall	full sun	For continual bloom, plant every two weeks until mid-summer; stake taller varieties; blooms mid-to-late summer; easy to grow
Vegetables and Herbs				
Basil (annual herb)	seeds	12"–24" tall	full sun	Will not tolerate frost; great to use in salads and in cooking; plant different flavors
Beans (annual)	seeds	plant 2" apart	full sun	Plant in rows or hills; irrigate heavily; weed diligently; about 55 to 60 days until harvest
Cucumber (annual vine)	seeds or transplants	plant in hills	full sun	Cukes take a lot of room, leave at least 3 feet between hills
Tomato (annual)	transplants	space 3 feet apart for large varieties	full sun at least 6 to 8 hours per day	Must be warm for good fruit production; water 1 inch per week

aura C. Martin is a garden writer and illustrator in Georgia.

New Gardening Products

Gardening tools are designed to make working in the landscape easier and more fun. In addition, many of the new products out on the market now are useful in helping the environment, from saving water to saving fossil fuels. While some of these products are old-turned-new, such as some of the heirloom digging tools, others draw on brand new technology to fill your garden with timeless beauty.

Deluxe Leaf Shredder

If you get tired of dumping seemingly endless numbers of fall leaves into bags—and then turning around and hauling numbers of bags of mulch back into the garden—this leaf shredder may be just the tool you need to eliminate both. It can convert 11 bags of leaves into one bag of mulch. Unlike other shredders, this one can handle pine needles, grass clippings and paper and has adjustments to make both coarse and finely shredded mulch. ($195)

Gardener's Supply Co.
www.gardeners.com

Neuton Cordless Electric Mower

Enjoy the ease of battery-powered mowing with the Neuton Cordless Electric Mower, now improved with an ergonomically designed handlebar assembly with cushioned grip and fingertip starting. Like its predecessor, it has the capability of trimming and edging. ($399)

Country Home Products
800-687-6575
www.countryhomeproducts.com

HydroGrow irrigation Hose

These flexible "soaker" hoses are great for getting the water directly into the ground and to the roots as efficiently as possible. The hose has a thick, porous wall for uniform water distribution. It waters a two-foot-wide band with only 8 pounds of water pressure. Uses ½-inch fittings. (50-foot hose, $16.95; 100-foot hose, $29.95)

Gardener's Supply Co.
www.gardeners.com

Water Timer

If you get frustrated trying to set a complicated and sophisticated water-timing system, just give up and get this simple, easy-to-use and inexpensive one. It needs no batteries or electricity (sort of like an egg timer for the garden). It can be set from 5-120 minutes and includes a snap-on hose connector and manual bypass. It will attach to any hose or faucet. ($39.95)

Gardener's Supply Co.
www.gardeners.com

Ursa Wagon

The Ursa Wagon has a light aluminum frame, large tires and high ground clearance. It easily carries up to 500 pounds, empties in one effortless motion, has high maneuverability and is weather-resistant. ($599-$649)

Ursa
866-877-2744
www.ursawagon.com

The Powerwagon

An oversized wagon with an 800-pound capacity, the Powerwagon PRO hauls firewood, building supplies, stone, gravel and dirt. It has an easy dumping bed, differential turning, disc brake and power reverse. Pace yourself with its four forward speeds. You can even ride with the optional tow-behind sulky. The weight rack on this model adds 100 extra pounds for improved traction in all conditions—especially when carrying a light payload. This is a 6-horsepower electric start model, but there are other sizes. (Sale priced at $1529.15 plus shipping)

Country Home Products
www.countryhomeporducts.com

Cyclone Rake

A mother of a rake, the Cyclone Rake picks up just about anything from your grounds. It is good for homes with acreage and will hitch to riding mowers or tractors of almost any size, even rear-engine riders. It has a 6-horsepower engine and a 200-gallon capacity. An impeller shrugs off rocks and hard debris. sixty-degree dumping angle. Features include leather-tough Denier collector bag, non-clogging vacuum system, and mirror finish triple-plated heavy steel hardware for all key parts. (Spring sale price $975)

Woodland Power Products
888-531-7253
www.cyclonerake.com

Black & Decker's Yardcare Center

These three products are sold together with a storage and charging station as the Yardcare Center for $199.99.

18-Volt Rechargeable 12-inch Trimmer/Edger: With the largest cutting path of any rechargeable trimmer, this one weighs only 6.5 pounds, and is comfortable for anyone to use. The Feed Spool automatically advances the cutting line. Sold with two, 18-volt batteries and a charger. ($99.99)

18-Volt Rechargeable 22-inch Hedge Trimmer: This cordless hedge trimmer features dual-action blades that provide extended reach while reducing vibration. Sold with one 18-volt battery and a charger. ($79.99)

18-Volt Rechargeable Broom/Hard Surface Sweeper: The cordless broom clears lawn clippings and debris in a matter of minutes. It has a built-in scraper and weighs only 5.5 pounds. Sold with two, 18-volt batteries and a charger. ($69.99)

Black & Decker
800-54-HOW-TO
www.blackanddecker.com

Mini FasTrak

This mower has zero-radius turning, welded steel decks, 6-gallon fuel capacity, 36- or 42-inch side-discharge mowing decks and a full two-year warranty on parts and labor. (About $5,000; catcher about $1,200)

Hustler Turf Equipment
800-395-4757
www.hustlerturfequipment.com

9 HP DR® Chipper

This new DR® Chipper is easily moved around with wheelbarrow-style handles, can handle branches up to 3 inches thick, and is able to recycle yard waste into valuable wood mulch. ($1,249)

Country Home Products
800-687-6575
www.countryhomeproducts.com

The All-Americans

by Laura C. Martin

They can grow in any garden

No matter where you live, spring means magic to a gardener. For those of us who love to dig in the dirt, there may be nothing more exciting than watching the earth begin to wake up from a long winter's nap. As shoots poke above ground and buds begin to swell and finally burst into beautiful, fragrant flowers, gardeners everywhere rejoice at the advent of another growing season.

Spring is the season of hope and optimism. This year, we promise ourselves, we will be diligent. We'll keep the weeds out and the mulch on. We'll water carefully and thoroughly. We'll shoo away the bugs and welcome in the birds. In spring, it all seems possible.

And it is possible. With a little information and a lot of enthusiasm, this truly can be the best gardening season ever. So, pull out the shovel and the trowel, open up the door—and welcome spring to the garden. Have fun!

All-America Selections

New for the flower garden

Each year the All-America Selections committee chooses new cultivars that do exceptionally well throughout the United States. With thousands of new varieties of flowers and vegetables coming on to the market each year, you can imagine how fierce the competition is. That means that the winners are truly outstanding in their field!

2005 flower winners:

Gaillardia aristata 'Arizona Sun'

These yellow-tipped petals surround a bright red center, making a great spot of color in the garden. Gaillardia loves heat and sunshine and has proven to thrive in even the harshest of conditions. It grows to be 12–14 inches tall, begins blooming early and will continue until fall. Perennial, but will bloom the first year.

Vinca 'First Kiss Blueberry' (Catharanthus roseus)

If you like the bright blossoms of vinca, you'll love this new variety that has violet blue flowers—with a dark violet eye. Each blossom measures 2 inches across. The plants, at maturity, grow 11–12 inches tall and spread about 16 inches. This is both heat and drought tolerant and needs full sun to perform best. Annual.

Zinnia F1 'Magellan™ Coral' (Zinnia elegans)

These tall (15–19 inch) plants bear gorgeous coral-colored blossoms that measure 5–6 inches across. Both the flower quality and color are superior. It blooms early and continues to produce consistently throughout the season. This is an annual flower, needs full sun.

2004 flower winners:

Celosia 'Fresh Look Red' (plumose)

This flower remains fresh and perky even in the midst of summer's heat and humidity. It produces beautiful plumes of rosy red flowers, is considered easy to grow and pest free. The plants grow about 12–18 inches tall. Needs full sun. Flowers can be cut and dried for everlasting bouquets. Annual.

Hollyhock 'Queeny Purple' (Alcea rosea)

This is the first purple hollyhock that is available as a single color rather than being striped or mixed. Edges of the petals are frilly and scalloped, blossoms measure 3–4 inches across. The plant, which grows 20–30 inches tall, produces blossoms abundantly. This is an annual flower, needs full sun.

2005 vegetable winners:

Eggplant F1 'Fairy Tale' (Solanum melongena)

This is an excellent vegetable to include in a container garden. It grows only 18–24 inches tall and has abundant yield. The fruit is purple with white stripes and is most tasty when harvested at a size of 4 inches long. It takes about 50 days to mature from planting a seedling or transplant.

Tomato F1 'Sugary' (Lycopersicon esculentum)

These little cherry-sized tomatoes are amazingly sweet, earning it the name 'Sugary.' Growing in clusters, somewhat like grapes, the plants produce consistently high yield. From transplants, it takes about 60 days to mature into eating-sized fruit.

Winter Squash F1 'Bonbon' (Curcurbita maxima)

Another incredibly sweet vegetable, this winter squash has deep green skin and orange flesh. Each fruit is about 4–5 pounds. The yield is consistently high. From transplants, it takes about 95 days to mature.

For more information about these and other winners, go to the AAS Web site: www.all-americaselections.org

Laura C. Martin is a garden writer and illustrator in Georgia.

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ROUND 10

YOU KNOW YOU'RE FROM

Carolina country if. . .

From Robert Erby, Rockingham
- Your camouflage isn't coordinated.
- You name stray dogs and feed them.
- Purple sandspurs or dandelions grow in your yard.
- You give six packs of beer for presents.
- You know what beggar lice are.
- You know wrunt means ruined.
- You use clothespins to close up chip bags.

From Robert E. Bynum Sr., Rocky Mount
- You busted wood.
- The stuff you start your fireplace fire with is called liddard.
- You eat mountain oysters, but you don't like seafood.
- You've left Macclesfield, went to Rocky Mount, then to St. Lewis and back to Macclesfield the same day, but did not go through the state of Missouri.
- Everyone in your family has worn the same pair of shoes.
- You learned to barbecue under a tobacco barn shelter.
- You know that a "single tree" contains no wood.
- You know what Davenport and Edgecombe-Martin County EMC have in common. (The electric co-op purchased the electricity service owned by Mr. Davenport.)
- You know how to cluck a mule.
- A crappie, a croppie, a speckled perch, and a chinquapin perch are the same fish to you.
- You've eaten chicken feet and rice together.

From Rose Prevette, North Wilkesboro
- You use these expressions:
  "She's crooked as a snake."
  "Would you put on a pawn of cornbread?"
  "I just gave my room a lick and a promise."
  "Boys, he was balling the jack."
  "That horse is barnyard dead."
  "His feet look like sled runners."

From Gertrude Wilson, Roxboro
- You believe "Down East" is anywhere between I-95 and the Outer Banks.
- Stringing beans means snapping them for cooking whether they have strings or not.
- An apple-peeling is a get-together to prepare apples for drying.
- A stomp-down is an old-fashioned square dance.
- You don't care if these memories give away your age.

From Jackie James, Rutherfordton
- You think grits and livermush should be international delicacies and don't understand why some people don't like them.
- You read the newspaper's local round-up to keep up with distant relatives.
- You've come home to a bag of fresh produce on your front porch many times and never know which neighbor it's from.
- You say ranch when you mean wrench.
- Your grandma believes old wives' tales are the gospel.
- Your mama yanked a knot in your behind for sassin' her.

From Renee Tench, Stanley
- You know someone who is as tight as Dick's hatband.
- Your son has had his nose opened by a pretty girl.
- You have checked your eyelids for leaks.
- On the first cold Saturday morning of the season, you think it's a good day for making sausage.
- You have ever dug up moss to use as carpet for your playhouse.
- One of your fondest memories is watching Fred Kirby save you from the bad guys on Tweetsie Railroad.
- Your mother hosed the red dirt off of you before you could come into the house.
- You have eaten tommy-toes.
- You used pokeberries for blood when playing cowboys and Indians.
- You "look" your beans before soaking them.

From Kelli Friday, Dallas
- You carry a traveler hook in your purse that can do anything from opening your locked car door to defending you.
- People ask you to do your Ernest T. Bass imitation at parties and you actually know all the words to "Old Aunt Mariah."
- You worked in the cotton mill with your daddy, your momma, a sister, a cousin, two uncles and your best friend all at the same time.
- You'd give anything to have a bingo samich like the ones your Mawmaw used to make you.
- Rock candy and whiskey help you fight the flu.
- ACC basketball is a season all its own in your house.
- You retire your car to the place behind the barn.

From Nancy Bodenheimer, Kernersville
- When you watered the cows, you took them to the branch, and on the way back you rode on a cow's back like a horse, then got a whooping that evening cause the cow only gave a pint of milk.
- The only thing you got for Christmas was a homemade sling shot made from a forked stick and strips of black rubber from an old tire inner tube.
- Your family looked for a small mound of dirt in the yard, knelt down and called "Doodle bug, doodle bug, come see me someday. I'll give you some butter and bread." Then dirt starts moving and out comes a brown bug.
- You looked for a hole in the ground, broke off a broom straw and stuck it in the hole. The straw wiggled, and when you yanked it, out popped a worm.
- You went outside school to pull a recess rope at 1 p.m.
- Someone tells you they're gonna dot your eyes and you know they don't mean to complete a picture of you.
- You go honey-hunting by going to the branch, watching the bees come for water, following the direction they fly, hunting the tree, robbing the bees and taking their honey.
- To make a swing you went to the woods to find a holler with a sapling on the bank that had "muskie dime" vines, then grabbed hold of the vine and took turns swinging across holler.
- Your dad doesn't have a job, but he tells people he works for Pat & Turner, meaning he pats the street and turns the corner.
- Your Friday field trip at school was to walk a half mile to the country store to buy Mary Janes, licorice or an all-day sucker.
- A neighbors' get-together was called a choppin, when the men hoed corn or worked in the fields and the ladies cooked dinner for them.

If you know any that we haven't published, send them to:
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See Rounds 1–9 on our Web site.

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*The Balanced Spectrum® floor lamp combines the benefits of natural daylight indoors with a savings of $51 over the life of one bulb!**

Ever since the first human went into a dark cave and built a fire, people have realized the importance of proper indoor lighting. Unfortunately, since Edison invented the light bulb, lighting technology has remained relatively prehistoric. Modern light fixtures do little to combat many symptoms of improper lighting, such as eyestrain, dryness or burning. As more and more of us spend longer hours in front of a computer monitor, the results are compounded. And the effects of indoor lighting are not necessarily limited to physical well-being. Many people believe that the quantity and quality of light can play a part in one's mood and work performance. Now there's a better way to bring the positive benefits of natural sunlight indoors.

With energy and bulb replacement savings, this lamp is practically free!

A 150-watt incandescent bulb uses $0.013 per hour in energy cost. The Balanced Spectrum® bulb uses an average of **70% less energy** which saves you $0.009 per hour. Based on 5,000 hours bulb life, the Balanced Spectrum® bulb will save **$46** in energy cost. *Plus*, because the Balanced Spectrum® bulb lasts 10 times longer than an incandescent bulb priced at an average of $0.50, an additional **$5** savings is realized.*

*Source: "Lighting the Way to Energy Savings"; 1999

The Balanced Spectrum® floor lamp will change the way you see and feel about your living or work spaces. Studies show that sunshine can lift your mood and your energy levels. But as we all know the sun, unfortunately, does not always shine. So to bring the benefits of natural daylight indoors, use the floor lamp that simulates the full spectrum of daylight. You will see with more clarity and enjoyment as this lamp provides sharp visibility for close tasks and reduces eyestrain.

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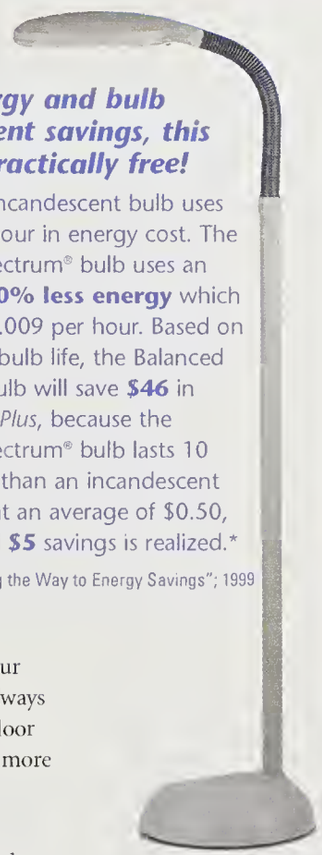
We've looked at lots of lights, but this one offers the benefit of dual light levels of 27 and 18 watts of power equivalent to 150-and 100-watt incandescent bulbs. This lamp has a flexible gooseneck design for maximum efficiency, with an "Instant On" switch that is flicker-free. The high-tech electronics, user-friendly design, and bulb that lasts 10 times longer than an ordinary bulb make this lamp a must-have.



Height as shown: 50"

"I sit in my comfortable chair after my husband has gone to bed, and I turn that lamp on. It makes it so nice because it's like daylight over my chair...I don't get sore eyes like I used to."

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Architectural artifacts

The Last Unicorn in Chapel Hill specializes in wrought-iron gates and fences, antique stained glass and other unique architectural artifacts for the home and garden. The inspiring "found art" showroom stretches across five acres of wooded wonderland, with gates and paths leading to hand-crafted wrought iron and glass tables, garden ornaments, stained-glass windows and other home and garden collectibles. Call (919) 968-8440 or visit www.thelastunicorn.com

New hostas

Green Hill Farm carries more than 175 varieties of traditional and new hosta plants, 40 varieties of ferns and many other shade perennials and small trees. The family-owned business in Chapel Hill, which is celebrating its 24th birthday this year, will be open locally starting mid-April. Visitors to its Web site can order year-round. The nursery's Web site also offers a free catalog, along with hosta information, history and gardening tips. Call (919) 309-0649 or visit www.hostahosta.com

Half hoe, half plow

The specially designed Hoeplow does the work of many tools. This new, lightweight garden device, balanced for efficiency, digs holes and trenches, moves dirt into hills, makes rows much faster than a regular hoe, scuffles out weeds and cuts off taproots down deep with its protruding blade. The tool is also wide enough to rake out weeds. Manufactured in Gates County, HoePlow costs $24.95, plus shipping. Call (877) 600-1212 or visit www.hoe-plow.com. HoePlow is also available at Hinckley's Hardware in Gates.

At the Arboretum

You can broaden your landscape design knowledge, tour special gardens and see hundreds of award-winning plants at the scenic North Carolina Arboretum, located in south Asheville adjacent to the Blue Ridge Parkway. The 426-acre garden, located within Pisgah National Forest, serves as a public center for education, research, conservation, economic development and garden demonstration. It offers a wide range of free activities and events for children and adults. The Arboretum also features sculpture, painting and photography exhibits by regional artists. You can stop by the Visitor Education Center to pick up a brochure listing this month's educational programs, guided trail and greenhouse tours, demonstrations and workshops, or get program information off their Web site. There is a parking fee, except on Tuesdays. If you would like to serve as a volunteer or have a question, call (828) 665-2492 or visit www.ncarboretum.org

Society and museum for gourd lovers

The Marvin and Mary Johnson Gourd Museum, open daily to the public, features gourd crafts from around the world. The museum, founded in 1964, is just off Highway NC 55 between Fuquay-Varina and Angier. It features tiny miniature gourds like robin's eggs, dippers taller than a tall man, and giant African mammoth gourds so strong the museum's founder had his picture taken standing on one. Even the lights are made from gourds. Touring the museum is free.

Gourd lovers can also check out the North Carolina Gourd Society, which is the oldest chapter of the American Gourd Society. It holds festivals, publishes a quarterly newsletter, gives out seeds and hosts special speakers at meetings. Over the years, its festivals have featured Mother Goose gourds, gourd dolls and a gourmet gourd buffet. Annual dues are $10 and include four newsletters.

Visit www.twincreek.com/gourds/museum.htm for museum information. For the North Carolina Gourd Society, call (919) 557-5946, or write North Carolina Gourd Society, 259 Fletcher Avenue, Fuquay-Varina, NC 27526.

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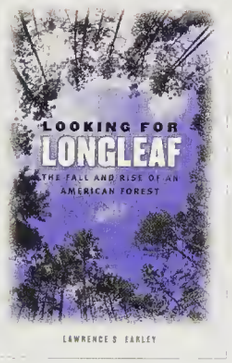
ON THE BOOKSHELF

Sweet Tea, Fried Chicken & Lazy Dogs

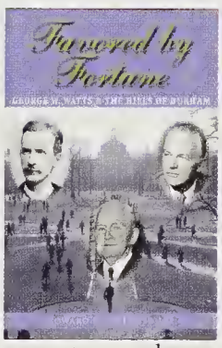
Our State magazine's "Front Porch" columnist and speaker Bill Thompson presents commentaries that explore his down-home roots, treasured memories, and the characters who shaped his character. In "Sweet Tea, Fried Chicken & Lazy Dogs," more than 50 essays celebrate the essence of rural and small-town life in North Carolina. Light-hearted looks include themes such as food, farming, music, family and neighbors. Specific titles include "Mr. Fix-It," "The Carolina Yard Dog," "The Milk Cow Incident," "The Little Piano Player," "The Art of Whittling," "Climbing the Family Tree," "My Valentine," and "Strawberries for Sale." Published by Our State Books in Greensboro. Softcover, $9.95. Call (800) 948-1409 or visit www.ourstate.com

A forest's rise and fall



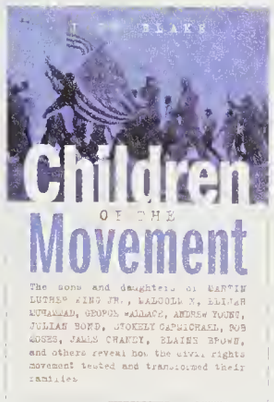
The longleaf pine once flourished, covering 92 million acres from Virginia to Texas. Now a small fraction of longleaf pine forest survives in the South, threatening such species as the gopher tortoise, red-cockaded woodpecker and Venus fly-trap. In "Looking for Longleaf: The Fall and Rise of an American Forest," author Lawrence S. Earley examines the rich history of these magnificent forests and the biodiversity of the longleaf ecosystem. Earley weaves together historical and ecological research, first-person travel accounts, and interviews with foresters, biologists, botanists and other sources to reveal what's been lost and what we might preserve and regain through conservation efforts for the future. Published by University of North Carolina Press in Chapel Hill. Hardcover, $27.50. Call (800) 848-6224 or visit www.uncpress.unc.edu

Generations who helped shape Durham



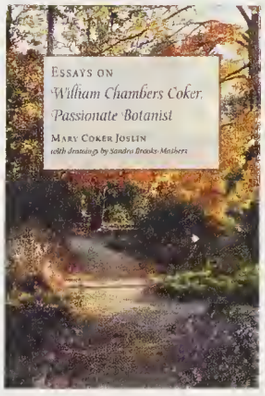
In this collective biography spanning four generations, author Howard Covington Jr. analyzes how a prestigious family shaped the development of Durham and North Carolina. "Favored by Fortune: George Watts and the Hills of Durham" examines the lives, personalities, philanthropic and political legacies of George Washington Watts, John Sprunt Hill, George Watts Hill and George Watts Hill Jr. to show how each became a leading figure in his generation. A better highway system and assisting in the development of Research Triangle Park were among their many achievements. Published by University of North Carolina Press in Chapel Hill. Hardcover, $34.95. Call (800) 848-6224 or visit www.uncpress.unc.edu

Children of civil rights leaders



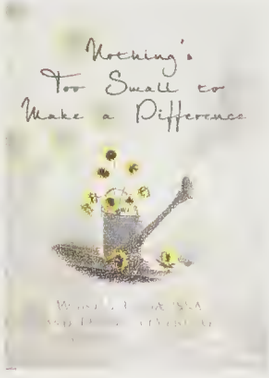
Marking the recent 50th anniversary of the pivotal Brown v. Board of Education court ruling, "Children of the Movement" explores the lasting, profound impact of the civil rights struggle on the sons and daughters of influential leaders. Author John Blake offers 23 personal profiles of recognizable names in the movement, including intimate, moving stories of families sometimes pulled roughly apart or brought together through the intense struggle. Among those profiled are sons and daughters of Martin Luther King Jr., Malcolm X, George Wallace, Stokely Carmichael and Elaine Brown. Hardcover, $24.95. Published by Lawrence Hill Books. Call (800) 888-4741 or visit www.ipgbook.com

Essays by William Chamber Coker, botanist



William Chamber Coker's interest in plants took root in early childhood. He went on to become the first professor of botany at UNC-Chapel Hill and founded the treasured Coker Arboretum and University Herbarium. "Essays On William Chambers Coker, Passionate Botanist" records his achievements as a creative scientist, infectious teacher, practical landscape designer and writer. Author Mary Coker Joslin, who lives in Raleigh, is Coker's niece. She is a scholar and retired French teacher. Co-published by Botanical Garden Foundation and University of Chapel Hill Libraries. Hardcover, $32.10. Send a check to: Attention: W.C. Coker Book Sales, c/o North Carolina Botanical Garden, Totten Center, C.B. 3375, UNC-Chapel Hill, NC 27599-3375. Or call (919) 962-0522.

Making a difference



Simplicity advocates Wanda Urbanska and Frank Levering believe it's not too late to take back our hectic lives. In their latest book, "Nothing's Too Small to Make a Difference," they explore American's quest for a more meaningful life and emphasize a guiding principle: every positive change, no matter how modest, has an impact. Chapters cover time, money, work, the environment, child rearing, community life, health, food and spiritual growth and focus on four themes: environmental stewardship, thoughtful consumption, financial responsibility and building community. The authors offer up practical advice on how to improve life and point the way toward a sustainable, healthy future. Published by John F. Publisher of Winston Salem. Hardcover, $21.95. Call (800) 222-9796 or visit www.blairpub.com

HOUSE OF SURPRISES

Körner's Folley Celebrates Its 125th Birthday

By Karen Olsen House

Körner's Folly, dubbed "The Strangest House in the World," has long amused visitors who gape at its fanciful Victorian rooms and showy furniture. Starting next month, the historic home in Kernersville hosts a year-long set of activities to celebrate its 125th anniversary. Festivities include a community party with barbecue and masquerade costume ball on April 2, and an ice cream social on June 25.

The eccentric Victorian structure was born when a dapper interior designer named Jule Körner broke ground on what he intended to be a showplace home. His unconventional design rose in the sky at a snail's pace, and reportedly caused a local to remark, "That will surely be Körner's folly." Jule overheard the crack and delightedly named his house thus, even setting an ornate nameplate out front. When Körner's Folly was "finished" in 1880, Jule continued to vigorously revamp it.

"There are no two rooms alike. People are amazed at its insight and ingenuity."

—Connie Russell
Executive Director
Preservation North Carolina

The house's original design featured three floors, but because Jule placed steps, up or down, at most doorways, the house has seven staggered levels. Ceiling heights for the Folly's 22 rooms range from six on up to 25 feet.

Jule's ad hoc approach included transforming stables into a sewing room/library and turning the drive-through carriageway into a dining room. Shortly before his marriage to Polly Alice Masten, he renovated rooms for family life, converting storage spaces into children's playrooms with floor-to-ceiling windows visible from rooms below.

On the front porch, the words "Witches Corner" are playfully inscribed into the tile, arranged to appear as throw rugs. Inside, intricately carved moldings frame the ceilings, with other decorative flourishes in abundance such as silk damask panels, maiden statues and painted frescoes.

Jule was afraid of fire and only permitted cigars in a tiled "smoker" room. One window there is about three feet high, while the other extends upward and is shared by a room upstairs. Neither window opens.

The master bedroom includes grand furniture Jule designed, such as his S-shaped conversation chair. It's a three-seater, with room for a chaperone. Many of Jule's inventive pieces were so massive they could not fit through doors and were constructed in the room. Jule also included whimsical "courting corners" where guests could sneak smooches behind silk curtains.

In keeping with its experimental spirit, Körner's Folly boasts the first little private theater in the United States, located in soaring attic space. Like Jule, his well-traveled wife (who went by "Alice") loved the arts. The Folly's theater got its start when a local girl came back from Boston hoping to give an elocution recital, only to be denied use of all community meeting places. In that time, play-acting was considered sinful. Alice decided to present her at the Folly.

Körner died feeling that his work-in-progress was unfinished. Later, the house fell into neglect and eventually Preservation North Carolina oversaw the establishment of Körner's Folly Foundation, which owns it now. "There are no two rooms alike," says Connie Russell, the foundation's executive director. "People are amazed at its insight and ingenuity."

Today, the plays live on at the Folly every fall, staged by the Kernersville Little Theatre, along with family puppet shows performed every fourth Saturday. And just like its original owner, the house still causes talk.

Körner's Folly
413 South Main Street
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For a current schedule of anniversary events, call (336) 996-7922 or visit www.kornersfolly.org

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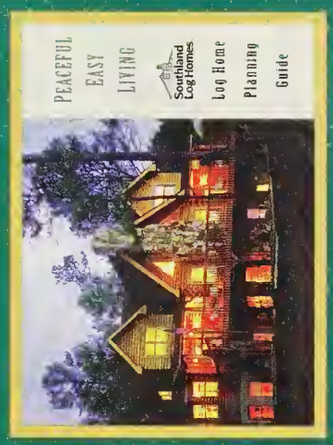

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Managing the risks and rewards of instant messaging

If you think about it at all, you probably think of instant messaging as something teenagers do to chat up friends online, whether across the street or across the world. But IM has some buttoned-down business benefits, as well as some risks you may not be aware of.

Unlike e-mail, in which you fire off messages to recipients who read them when they next check their in-box, with IM you and your recipient have to be online at the same time. But the messaging is instantaneous, or nearly so, and rapidly interactive, back and forth.

Many business people use IM for collaboration. Among other things, it lets you send spreadsheets or other documents as attachments and do voice and video conferencing.

An estimated 21 million business people worldwide use IM, and though this figure is roughly 10 percent of the total number of IM users, business use of IM is expected to grow much more quickly over the next three years than consumer use, according to figures e-mailed to me by Robert Mahowald, research manager at IDC, a market research firm in Framingham, Mass.

Fully half of the companies it surveyed reported that they've either already deployed IM or plan to within the year, according to Warren Sethachutkul, an analyst for JupiterResearch, a market research firm in New York City.

But many people in the office, like teenagers, also use IM for personal chats. Fully 58 percent of workplace users, in fact, use IM primarily for personal rather that business purposes, according to a new survey of 840 U.S. large and small businesses by the ePolicy Institute and the American Management Association.

"Many office workers are sending inappropriate and potentially damaging [IM] messages," says Nancy Flynn, director of the ePolicy Institute, a consulting firm in Columbus, Ohio (http://epolicyinstitute.com).

According to the same survey, 16 percent of office workers are sending jokes, gossip, rumors or disparaging remarks; 9 percent are sending confidential information about their company, clients or coworkers; and 6 percent are sending messages with romantic, sexual or pornographic content.

As you might expect, this can expose a business to unneeded, unwanted legal liability.

One reason for this is many employees are using free IM programs, such as AOL Instant Messenger, Yahoo Messenger, and MSN Messenger, without management's knowledge or the IT department's authorization, says Flynn, who has written a new book, "Instant Messaging Rules: A Business Guide to Managing Policies, Security, and Legal Issues for Safe IM Communication," published by Amacom.

Another reason for the unnecessary legal exposure is that even with many businesses that are aware of their employees' use of IM, there's no official policy governing IM use and content and no attempt to monitor, purge, retain and otherwise control IM use and risks.

In her book, Flynn enumerates 32 rules, or best practices, that organizations should follow to make the most of IM while minimizing the risks. She goes into detail with each one. At her Web site, she lets you read in full two sample chapters while also providing other advice on workplace IM and e-mail policy and management.

Among Flynn's rules:

"Act now to uncover unauthorized instant messaging use."
By this Flynn means testing your network for the presence of consumer IM programs that employees have brought in through the "back door" and informally surveying employees to see what type of IM communication they're engaged in. This will help you later draft IM policies.

"Don't rush to ban instant messaging."
Some experts dispute IM's overall productivity benefits, and banning it completely may seem like a simple and effective solution to IM risk. But this may not be so easy to enforce without draconian policies.

"Don't rush to standardize instant messaging."
"Enterprise" IM programs, which are more feature-laden than the free programs, restrict employees to communicating with one another. Examples include IBM's Lotus Workplace Messaging (www.lotus.com/workplacemessaging) and Sun's Java System Instant Messaging (www.sun.com/software/products/instant_messaging).

Instead, Flynn recommends "gateway" IM programs, which let employees use the popular free programs but give employers control over this use. Major vendors include Akonix Systems Inc. (www.akonix.com), FaceTime Communications Inc. (www.facetime.com), and IMlogic Inc. (www.imlogic.com).

"Use instant messaging policy to provide clear guidelines for employees' personal use."
Flynn is a big proponent of clear, unambiguous written policies that spell out to employees the appropriate use of IM and other communications technologies. Requiring the use of businesslike language with all messages, for instance, can help limit the organization's liability risks regarding hostile work environment as well as sexual harassment and discrimination charges.

Reid Goldsborough is a syndicated columnist and author of the book "Straight Talk About the Information Superhighway." He can be reached at reidgold@netaxs.com or www.netaxs.com/~reidgold/column

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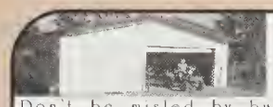

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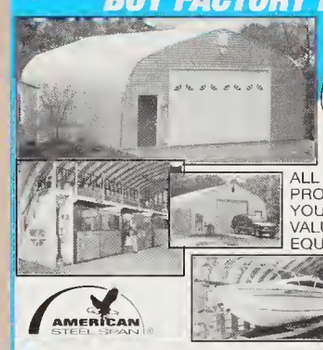

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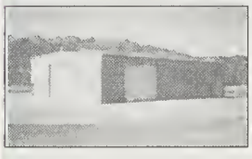

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8									
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6									
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3									
2									
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The winner and my solution will be published in our May issue. You may want to use the grid to eliminate impossibilities.

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STONE = 28
NOTE = 26
TEN = 22
VEST = 20
SIT = 16
VELVET = 31
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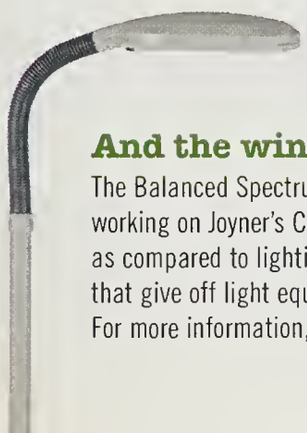

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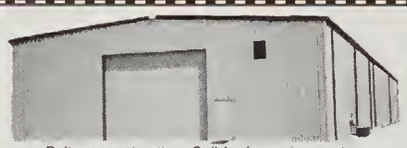

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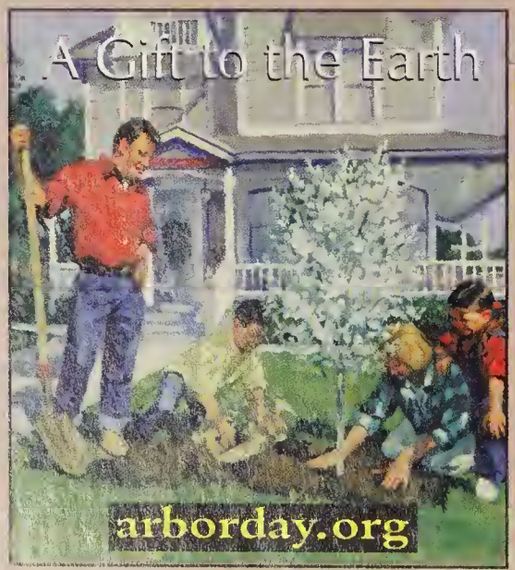

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$150,000	$832.49	30 YR. Fixed	*5.29	5.47%
$200,000	$666.50	Power Arm	**1.25	5.07%

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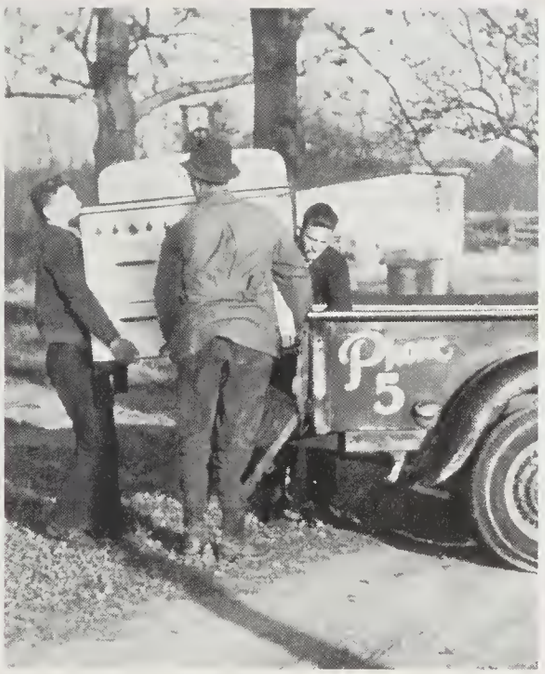

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Send us your photographs dated before 1970. They will be judged according to the qualifications listed below. We'll publish the selected pictures in a limited edition, high-quality hardcover "coffee table" book that will be available in Fall 2005.

There is no other book like this one! You can be part of it!

Judging Qualifications: Photos must show North Carolina people, places or events up to 1970: routine activities, chores, communities, sports, vacations, meals, work sites, church events, clubs, good times and bad, challenges and joys. Portraits or snapshots of families or individuals will not be selected unless they show something truly unusual. Photos must be reproduction quality (clear focus, no severe creases or stains). Black & white and color are both acceptable. Slides and negatives are OK. (No newspaper photos, please.) They must be free of restrictive license or copyright.

What to Send: Photograph only—do not send frames. Protect against bending. Prints can be any size. Digital images must be 300 dpi and must measure at least 5 by 7 inches at 300 dpi.

Include: Description of content (year if known, location, people's names, photographer's name if known). Your story about the picture. Your name, mailing address, phone number, e-mail address.

Terms: We will scan all photos as they are received and return originals immediately in safe mailers. Contributors of selected photographs will be notified in summer 2005. Contributors of selected photographs will receive one book at no charge. (One book per contributor.) Carolina Country retains reprint rights.

Deadline: All photos must be received by May 1, 2005.

Send photographs to: Carolina Country Reflections, 3400 Sumner Blvd., Raleigh, NC 27616

E-mail: Carolina.country@ncemcs.com

Questions: (919) 875-3062 or (919) 875-3090

Carolina country

March EVENTS

MOUNTAINS

Live Coffee House Music
Saturdays, Marion
(828) 652-6216
www.uniquegalleriesNC.com

"When You Are Smiling"
Thru March 11, West Jefferson
(336) 846-ARTS

Tribute to Elvis Concert
March 4, Morganton
(828) 433-SHOW

Lynn Trefzger, Comedien & Ventriloquist
March 12, West Jefferson
(336) 246-4483
www.ashecivic.com

Second Wind in Concert
March 13, Brasstown
(828) 389-0033
www.mapaa.org

PIEDMONT

Sky Over Gastonia
Weekends, Gastonia
(704) 866-6900
www.schielemuseum.org

Home and Garden Show
March 2–6, Charlotte
(800) 849-0248
www.SouthernSpringHome andGardenShow.com

Tampa Blue Concert
March 4, Pilot Mountain
(336) 368-7111
www.sawbriar.com

Art of the Blacksmith
March 5, Huntersville
(704) 875-2312
www.lattaplantation.org

Donna Hughes Concert
March 5, Pilot Mountain
(336) 368-7111
www.sawbriar.com

National Symphony
March 9, Fayetteville
(910) 323-1776
www.theartscouncil.com

Frank Ward Jr. Concert
March 13, Fayetteville
(910) 672-1571
www.uncfsu.edu

Cavalry Weekend
March 19–20, Huntersville
(704) 875-2312
www.lattaplantation.org

Kovack Pottery Festival
March 19–21, Seagrove
(336) 873-8727
www.kovackpottery.pottery grovegifts.com

"Frenzy"
Comedy & Juggling
March 11, Winston-Salem
(336) 723-6320, ext. 201
www.dcaproductions.com

The ensemble Abegg Trio performs chamber music on March 25 in Oriental. Call (252) 249-3676 or visit www.pamlicomusic.org

The duo known as Second Wind will be performing their mix of medieval, renaissance, baroque, classical and modern music on March 13 in Brasstown. Call (828) 389-0033 or visit www.mapaa.org

John Cowan & Vassar Clements Concert
March 12, Winston-Salem
(336) 723-6320
www.johncowan.com
www.vassarclements.com

Highfalls Fiddler's Convention
March 12, Robbins
(910) 464-3600
www.mcs.k12.nc.us/hfl

Naomi's Fancy Celtic
March 17, Pilot Mountain
(336) 369-7111
www.sawbriar.com

Bluegrass Show
March 19, Goldsboro
(919) 222-2445
audiofarmrecording@yahoo.com

Laura Blackley Blues
March 19, Pilot Mountain
(336) 368-7111
www.sawbriar.com

Tom Fisch Concert
March 25, Pilot Mountain
(336) 368-7111
www.sawbriar.com

Acoustic Jazz
New Dawg Revue
March 26, Pilot Mountain
(336) 368-7111
www.sawbriar.com

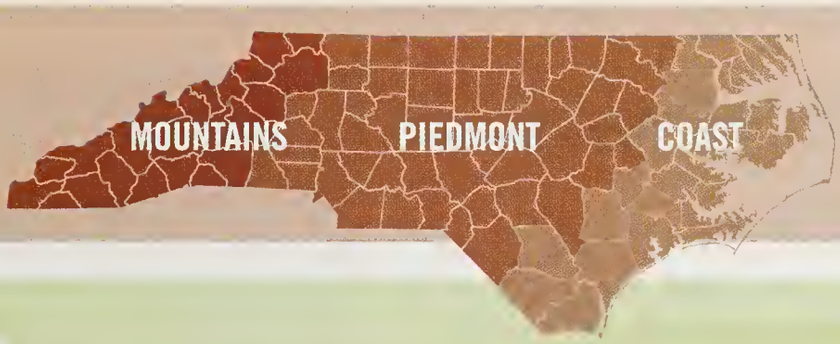
COAST

The Last Sacrifice
March 10–April 16, Edenton
(252) 482-4621

Old Fashion Day
March 19–20, White Oak
(910) 866-5916
www.geocities.com/woruritan/oldfashionplanter.html

Abegg Trio Concert
March 25, Oriental
(252) 249-3676
www.pamlicomusic.org

Handel's Messiah
March 26, Bath
(252) 943-2957



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Or Submit Listings by Mail, Fax or E-Mail: Please include title, date(s), location, phone number and/or Web site url. Photos (300 dpi or hard copies) are welcome.

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Fax: 919-878-3970 | e-mail: carolina.country@ncemcs.com

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Sallie Middleton Watercolors
Through March 15, Asheville
(828) 665-2492

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Through March 31,
Kings Mountain
(704) 739-1019

Winter Crafter's Series
Through April 30,
Blowing Rock
(828) 295-0034
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How The Memory Works
Through May 1, Durham
(919) 220-5429
www.ncmls.org

1960–1980 Perspectives
Ongoing, Asheville
Asheville Art Museum
(828) 253-3227
www.ashevilleart.org

PIEDMONT

Magic Wings Butterfly House
Ongoing, Durham
Museum of Life and Science
(919) 220-5429
www.ncmls.org

Fantastic Fossils
March 1–15, Gastonia
The Schiele Museum
of Natural History
(704) 866-6900
www.schielemuseum.org

Catawba Indian Village
Ongoing, Gastonia
Schiele Museum
of Natural History
(704) 866-6908
www.schielemuseum.org

Vessels
Through March 6,
Charlotte Mint Museum
of Craft & Design
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www.mintmuseum.org

The Harry & Mary Dalton Art Collection
Through March 20, Charlotte
Mint Museum of Art
(704) 337-2009
www.mintmuseum.org

African-American Quilts
Through March 25, Charlotte
The Charlotte
Museum of History
(704) 568-1174
www.charlottemuseum.org

History of Flowerpots
Through March 26, Seagrove
(336) 873-8430

If These Walls Could Talk
Through May 1, Charlotte
Discovery Place
(704) 372-6261
omnimaxinfo@discoveryplace.org

Back to the 60's
Through May 31, Oxford
Granville County Museum
(919) 693-9706

Treasures Unearthed: NC's Spectacular Gems & Minerals
Through June 12,
Raleigh, N.C.
Museum of
Natural Sciences
(919) 733-7450
www.natural
sciences.org

Porcelain American Style
Through June 26,
Charlotte, Mint Museum of
Art, (704) 337-2000
www.mintmuseum.org

Forces of Nature
Through Sept. 6, Charlotte
(704) 372-6261
omnimaxinfo@discoveryplace.org

"War on Terror"
Through Dec. 2005, Fayetteville
Airborne & Special
Operations Museum
(866) 547-0649
www.asomf.org

COAST

Artifacts and Art
Ongoing, Hatteras Island
Frisco Native
American Museum
(252) 995-4440
www.nativeamericanmuseum.org

"From The Attic"
Through March 20, Beaufort
N.C. Maritime Museum
(252) 728-7317
www.ncmm-friends.org

Quilt Extravaganza
March 1–25, Manteo
(252) 475-1500

Contemporary Quilts
Through May 15, Wilmington
Louise Wells
Cameron Art Museum
(910) 395-5999
www.cameronartmuseum.com

Carolina Springtime Art
March 1–April 30,
Morehead City
(252) 726-7550
www.cagallery.net

Youth in Arts
March 13, Edenton
(252) 482-8005

Tennessee Walking Horse
March 19, Bayboro
(877) 635-1001

Visit The Schiele Museum of Natural History in Gastonia to view "Fantastic Fossils," March 1–15. See fossils of footprints, leaves, bones, hair, teeth, tree sap and more. Cost is $3 for adults or $2 for students and seniors with museum admission. Call (704) 866-6900 or check out www.schielemuseum.org

Energy ratings help you compare appliances' efficiency

By James Dulley

Using the most efficient appliances and products in your home can significantly cut your utility bills. This will also reduce air pollution and the environmental damage caused by exploring for and transporting fuels, which can stretch our finite fossil fuel supply for your children's future needs.

When comparing the efficiency of many new products for your home, particularly smaller appliances that use electricity, it often takes the quick use of a calculator to determine which are most efficient. The wattage rating listed on the label indicates how fast it uses electricity.

Luckily, the government and the manufacturers' associations have made it easier to compare efficiencies of the highest energy-use items commonly used in homes. They either show energy efficiency ratings or estimated annual energy use.

Heating and cooling are the greatest consumers of energy in most homes. All furnaces, heat pumps and central air conditioners will have one of the efficiency ratings discussed below. A higher number indicates a higher efficiency. Keep in mind, more efficient models usually cost more initially, so you should have the contractor do a payback analysis for your home. Just because your neighbor has a particular model, don't just assume it also is the best one for your home.

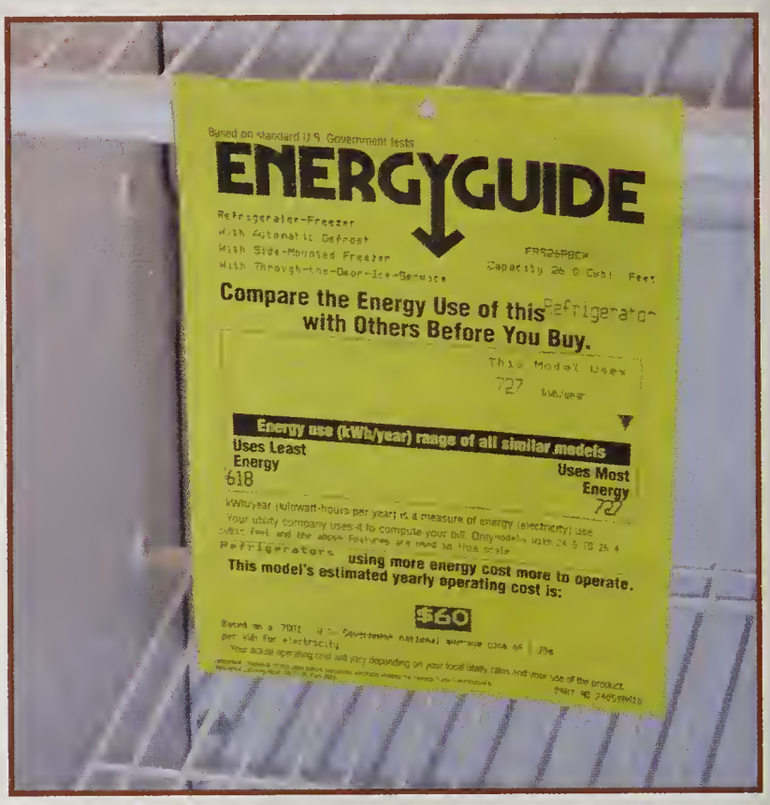
HSPF (heating seasonal performance factor) is a heating efficiency rating that compares the seasonal electricity use of heat pumps. SEER (seasonal energy efficiency ratio) is a cooling efficiency rating that compares the seasonal electricity use of heat pumps or central air conditioners.

Heat pumps and central air conditioners are unique appliances in that, as the outdoor temperature changes, so do their efficiencies. This is because a heat pump, which is basically a central air conditioner running in reverse during the winter, must draw its heat energy from outdoors.

This is easy to do when it is 50 degrees outdoors, so the heat pump operates very efficiently. When the outdoor temperature drops to 10 degrees, the efficiency and heat output of the heat pump drop substantially. There are also inefficiencies when the heat pump starts and stops and the HSPF and SEER take this into account.

EER (energy efficiency ratio) is the cooling efficiency rating that compares the electricity use for window and portable air conditioners. It is a less accurate comparison than SEER because it uses just a steady-state (highest efficiency) operation.

AFUE (annual fuel utilization efficiency) is the heating efficiency rating that compares the fuel use of natural gas, propane and oil furnaces.


ENERGYGUIDE
Compare the Energy Use of this Refrigerator with Others Before You Buy.
Energy use (kWh/year) range of all similar models
Uses Least Energy
618
Uses Most Energy
727
This model's estimated yearly operating cost is:
$60

Heating water is another major energy consumer in most homes. Water heater efficiency can be compared by its EF (energy factor). Water heaters also have a yellow energy guide label on the tank that lists the estimated annual operating cost. You can also use the yellow energy label to compare refrigerator/freezer and washing machine efficiencies.

Visit the Association of Appliance and Equipment Association's Web site at www.gamanet.org to find efficiency ratings and output capacities of these heating appliances (includes electric water heaters). Efficiency ratings of heat pumps and air conditioners can be found at the Web site of the Air Conditioning and Refrigeration Institute at www.ari.org. There are thousands of models listed by manufacturer in downloadable PDF format.

Lighting is another significant electricity consumer. Generally, compact fluorescent bulbs are going to be much more efficient than standard incandescent bulbs. Even though they are quite a bit more expensive to purchase initially, their long life and high efficiency make them a good buy.

Various wattage bulbs, particularly incandescents, have different efficiencies. A higher-wattage bulb is often more efficient than a lower-wattage one. To compare them, read the packaging for the amount of light output in lumens. Take your calculator and divide this by the bulb wattage. This tells you how much light output you get for the amount of electricity being used.

Energy Star (www.energystar.gov) is another excellent source when selecting energy-efficient home products. Products that meet their high-efficiency standards are listed in many categories. You will also often see the Energy Star label on the most efficient products in appliance dealer showrooms.

Send inquiries to James Dulley, Carolina Country, 6906 Royalgreen Dr., Cincinnati, OH 45244 or visit www.dulley.com.

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recipes editor, **Jenny Lloyd**

Peanut Chocolate Cake

- ½ cup butter, softened
- 2¼ cups packed brown sugar
- 3 eggs
- 3 squares (1 ounce each) unsweetened chocolate, melted and cooled
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 2¼ cups all-purpose flour
- 2 teaspoons baking soda
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 cup (8 ounces) sour cream
- 1 cup water

Frosting:

- 1 cup butter
- 1 cup peanut butter*
- 4 cups confectioners' sugar
- ¼ cup milk
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 1 cup finely chopped peanuts

In a large mixing bowl, combine butter and brown sugar; beat in eggs, chocolate and vanilla. Combine the flour, baking soda and salt; add to creamed mixture alternately with the sour cream.

Gradually beat in water. Pour into two greased and floured 9-inch round baking pans. Bake at 350 degrees for 35-40 minutes or until a toothpick inserted near the center comes out clean. Cool for 10 minutes before removing from pans to wire racks to cool completely.

For frosting, cream the butter, peanut butter, confectioners' sugar, milk and vanilla in a mixing bowl until smooth; set aside. Split each cake into two layers. Place a bottom layer on a serving plate; spread with about ½ cup frosting.

Repeat layers twice. Top with the remaining cake. Frost top and sides of cake. Gently press peanuts into sides of cake.

Yield: 12 servings.

**Reduced-fat or generic brands of peanut butter are not recommended for this recipe.*

Crunchy Chocolate Eggs

- 1 cup packed brown sugar
- 1 cup light corn syrup
- 1 cup peanut butter*
- 2 cups cornflakes
- 2 cups crisp rice cereal
- ½ cup finely chopped peanuts
- 3¾ cups semisweet chocolate chips
- 1½ teaspoons shortening
- Candy sprinkles

In a heavy saucepan, combine brown sugar, corn syrup and peanut butter. Cook and stir over medium heat until smooth. Remove from the heat; stir in the cereal and peanuts.

When cool enough to handle, drop by tablespoons onto waxed paper-lined baking sheets. Form into egg shapes. Refrigerate until firm. In a microwave, melt chocolate chips and shortening; stir until smooth. Dip eggs in chocolate; allow excess to drip off. Place on waxed paper-lined baking sheets. Decorate with sprinkles. Let stand until set.

Yield: 4½ dozen.

**Reduced-fat or generic brands of peanut butter are not recommended for this recipe.*

Peanut Butter Pie

- 1¼ cups chocolate wafer crumbs (20 wafers)
- ¼ cup sugar
- ¼ cup butter, melted

Filling:

- 1 package (8 ounces) cream cheese, softened
- 1 cup creamy peanut butter
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 tablespoon butter, softened
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 cup heavy whipping cream, whipped
- Grated chocolate or chocolate wafer crumbs

In a small bowl, combine cookie crumbs and sugar; stir in butter. Press onto the bottom and up the sides of a 9-inch pie plate. Bake 375 degrees for 10 minutes. Cool on a wire rack.

For filling, beat the cream cheese, peanut butter, sugar, butter and vanilla in a large mixing bowl until smooth. Fold in whipped cream. Gently spoon into crust. Garnish with chocolate or cookie crumbs if desired. Store in the refrigerator.

Yield: 8-10 servings.

Recipes are by Taste of Home magazine. For a sample copy, send $2 to Taste of Home, Suite 4321, P.O. Box 990, Greendale WI 53129-0990. Visit the Web page at www.tasteofhome.com.

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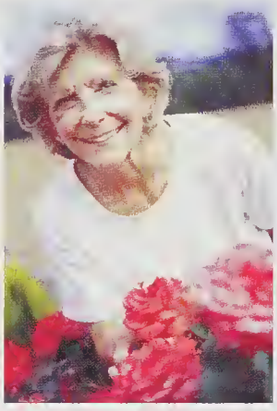

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